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THE

PHILOSOPHY OF REFORM;

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE BEREAN INSTITUTE,

IN THE

BROADWAY TABERNACLE,

NEW-YORK, JAN. 20, 1843;

WITH

FOUR DISCOURSES,

Upon the same general topic,

DELIVERED IN NEW-YORK AND BROOKLYN.

BY REV. E. H. CHAPIN,
Charlestown, Mass.

NEW-YORK:

C. L. STICKNEY, 130 FULTON STREET.

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P R E F A C E .

THE only reason that is offered for the publication of this work, is, that it discusses questions of immediate interest to our country and our age—questions which are connected with the great Principle of REFORM. The Lecture, and the Discourses which follow it, will be found to discuss this principle, more or less. They were originally delivered without any reference to each other, but in the order in which they are arranged in this volume, will be found to present something like a connected series. The Lecture discusses the main doctrine of Reform, as it is agitated in our day. The first Discourse and those that succeed it, take a Christian view of Reform, which, as is hinted in the Lecture, is directly based upon the Gospel. The first Discourse presents the Moral and Benevolent Associations of our day as the great point of union for all the Christian forces. The second exhibits and condemns that spirit of Intolerance which

opposes this union. The third maintains that the law of Christianity in each individual soul, is the only guaranty of the success of these Associations, and represents them as auxiliary to a higher end—the culture of the individual man. The last* Discourse endeavors to show the manner in which Christianity proceeds to effect this great work.

Enough, if this Book may accomplish its share of good, and aid, though very humbly, in the up-building of God's kingdom upon the earth and in the human soul. To that end may His blessing rest upon it.

E. H. C.

CHARLESTOWN, Mass., Feb. 1843.

* It was the original design to publish only the Lecture, and the four Discourses which immediately follow; but in the progress of the work, it was found there would be room, in the first allotted size of the book, for another Discourse, so the fifth has been added, which is designed to carry out the subject still farther, and show what is the Great Law, that shall elevate and purify the soul of each man, and thus bring about the END of all true Reforms.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REFORM.

THE most potent word of the present day—the word that is most significant in its meaning, and extensive in its influence—is REFORM. Often abused, often misapprehended, the delirium of the monomaniac, the mock-word of the ignorant and the heartless; yet, in some sense, every mouth utters it, and every soul is thrilled by it. It is spoken fearfully by the timid *Conservative*, who crouches in the shadows of the Past, or arrogantly assumes that all goodness is enshrined at the altar where *he* worships. It blisters the lips of the narrow *Fanatic* who, vaunting boisterously of freedom, is the slave of a deformed idea. It is discussed by indolent, good-natured men, who philosophize in easy chairs, and, sitting at their tables of abundance, fervently hope that no one starves. And it gushes up from free, strong souls, whose feet upon the mountains bring messages of joy, who have wrought in the night-time with Faith and Prayer, and who, looking forth upon earth's wide millions, bid them take courage and rejoice—for yonder kindles the rising day.

But now, let us consider seriously, what is the Idea that lurks under this word *Reform*. Is it a legitimate Idea—an Idea founded in the nature of things? And, again, what is Reform? Is it a principle which as Philanthropists and Christians, we can adopt, and strive, and hope for? The discussion of these questions, will furnish what we have to say at this time, upon THE PHILOSOPHY OF REFORM.

And the first thing that I shall advance, is the fact that Reform, if not an innate, is at least an indwelling principle in the soul of every man. There lies there a presentiment, often dim and unheeded, it may be, yet a presentiment of *something better*, an idea of a *greater good* to be obtained, which renders him dissatisfied with his *present* state, and urges him to seek another. I have used a word here which I wish to convey a precise meaning. *Presentiment*;—not a hope only, not a mere wish, not a phantasy; but a revelation of what lies beyond us, given in glimpses sufficient to show us that *something is there*. We may not say that the soul first reaches out after that—this might be a self-created delusion; but *that* first reaches out to the soul, and so it is a *prophecy*—a shadow, it may be, yet a shadow of *things to come*, a shadow that falls from actual

and external objects. And, I say, this seems to be, universally, an indwelling principle in the human soul. Your primitive man, who seeks to clothe his nakedness, though it be in the undressed skin of the wild beast that he has just torn from his lair, or to build him a shelter, though it is only a bark hut,—he acts upon this idea of Reform. It seems a wide interval between such a condition and our refinement and civilization, yet every stage of that interval has been passed through *gradually*. But why should man take the *first* step, without this idea of something better, this presentiment of a practical good? And when the first step was taken, why would men take the *second*, and the *third*, and so on, without a repetition of the idea? And how would men keep progressing, if this idea were not in constant action, ever urging them forward? If human progress is a truth, that progress is according to a *law*, as much as the march of the waters, or the evolution of geological changes is according to a law. And this law is found in the idea of *improvement*—in other words, in the principle of *Reform*. If as a race of beings we are made to progress, how can we do so unless we alter *existing* institutions, and seize upon *new* and *better*? If every custom, or opinion, is suffered to remain precisely where it

is now, we shall be stationary; or, rather, we shall retrograde, we shall grow worse—for the spring of health is *action*, and our life becomes tainted and stagnant if we do not *move*.

Moreover: this principle of Reform accounts to me for many of the evils that lie around us. The vegetable world is limited in its development, and soon arrives at perfection. But in the world of *mind* it is not so. No perfect uninspired man has yet appeared on the face of the earth. No perfect state of society has yet existed, save in the dreams of Plato and Sir Thomas More. And what we have received has been all conflict, uncertainty, darkness mingled with light, the evolution of a better state of things only after a painful struggle—and then, perhaps, a retrograde movement, or a stationary period, which has discouraged men who trusted in the good and the true, and given occasion for others to say—"there is no such thing as human progress." But this has all been wisely ordered. The tree has grown up at once to a perfect tree, because beyond its own mere *being* there was no ulterior object to secure. But for man there is an ulterior object to secure, beyond his mere existence. He is not only to *be* but to *know*—not only to obey laws, but to become "a law unto himself," and he can only do this by *ex-*

perience and by *labor*. So he must have something to undergo, he must have something to overcome. If that which he needs comes directly to his hand, he makes no effort to get it, and therefore no strength is developed in him. If there is no obstacle to overcome, no danger to brave, then there will be no self-confidence, which depends upon our consciousness of possessing powers, with which we cannot become acquainted until something occurs to call them into exercise. So it is well that man is not *made* perfect, but that he should *grow* to perfection. He finds the good, by passing through the evil, and appreciates it. The weak sinews become strong by their conflict with difficulties. Hope is born in the long night of watching and tears. Faith visits us in defeat and disappointment, amid the consciousness of earthly frailty, and the crumbling tombstones of mortality.

But you perceive that the key which explains all these hieroglyphics of evil, is the principle of Reform. If the world of mind, if man and society, grew up in each age as they did in the preceding ages, exhibiting the invariable sameness and the limited developement of the trees of the forest, then our individual and social evils would be inexplicable. We might well ask—
“why was not the moral world created perfect

after its kind, as the vegetable world is created perfect after its kind?" But now, the enigma is solved. There is given to man a principle of Reform. He is made to *learn*, to *know*, and to *progress*. He is not merely to *be*, like the zoöphyte and the oyster, of which we can say that they have sense, and that is all; but he is to *do*, to *create*, to *enjoy*. Poor earth-worm as he now seems, he is to become a UNIT in God's world, as distinct and as complete as a star. From this defiled organism, writhing with pain, marred by passion, heel-trampled and neck-yoked, are to be developed—by labor, by battle, by prayer,—an ever-growing *Intelligence*, and a quenchless *Love*, that shall *mean* something and *possess* something in the boundless universe of the Deity, when the trees may no longer grow, nor the rivers run, nor the stars shine, because they shall have fulfilled *their* mission and passed away.

This principle of Reform, then, is a legitimate principle, because it is that which urges men to contend with existing evils, which evils appear to exist, as one great object at least, for the purpose of creating energy and virtue—for the purpose of exciting ideas and establishing principles, which, if not all immediately practical and useful, are necessary to the developement of the perfect

man. Accordingly, we find whenever Reforms are agitated, that great questions are always raised, discussion is held upon the most vital interests of humanity, the distinction between right and wrong is clearly brought out, men throw themselves back upon *principles*, they abandon temporal institutions for eternal ideas, they go behind the formal letter to the living spirit. All of which is by no means unaccompanied with evil. We shall have vagaries enough. Optimism and Ultraism; theories spun with hairs; schemes of primeval innocence that provide not even a fig-leaf; speculations that *look* gorgeous and symmetrical, but that shall vanish when we seek to touch them "*un-miraculously enough*," as Carlyle would say, because they are made out of cloud-land, and glitter with the prismatic colors of fancy. Yet all this goes to establish what I have said;—that there is a legitimate function for the principle of Reform, which is the great idea that urges us to contend with existing evils, and to seek a good that as yet lies beyond us; and these very evils exist in order that the good may be suggested. And when men are roused by them to action, they will, naturally, discuss the right and the wrong of things, and very naturally go too far, and entertain crude notions; and, by the law of re-

action, pass from one extreme to the other. It is a natural consequence that the opposition, the ultraism, and the indifference, to which I alluded in the commencement as being rife in our age, should now prevail. Owing, as I think, to the diffusion of knowledge, to a better perception of Christianity, and to the quick communion of thought that abounds, the present age is what it is—peculiarly an age of Reform. And as it is now, it has always been in the world's history. Wherever Reform has been agitated, there always have been those who have set themselves against it as the fruitful germ of all evil—those who have perverted it, and carried it into the worst excesses—and those who have stood lazily by, and *wished* it well, without moving one pampered limb to aid the work. But our's, I say, is *peculiarly* an age of Reform—an age of far-reaching, intense effort. Never so has the great cause of humanity been pleaded—never so have men looked below the formal, the time-serving, the vestments of things, to central and primary ideas. Never with such bold and confident hands have men laid hold of existing institutions; and though, with the *true* that will stand amid all the shaking, I believe that much that is *false* must yet stand for some time also, still I think that glorious and beneficial results

will grow out of this mighty agitation. And I am not afraid because of the *evils* that accompany these things, for I know that they naturally appear ; they are the concomitants of every period of Reform. I know that ultraism and passion, and sensuality and selfishness, are mixed up in all this commotion. I know it is likely if some proposed Reforms were realized in their present shape, we should have a Pandemonium, instead of an Eden. I know that mere abstractionists, as they sow in dreams, will reap shadows. I know that it is idle to suppose that every man who broaches something novel has therefore got something good, or that every little clamorous *clique* is formidable, and based upon some important idea. But I say, once more, these are the attendants of every Reformation, and with all their fermentation and all their shams, they prove that a great *reality* is working at the bottom ;—they could not be, did not that reality exist. Of all the great Reforms of our day, I know hardly of one, that, freed from the imperfections of individual judgment, and reduced to its fundamental idea, is not based on righteousness and truth.

Thus we see the legitimacy of Reform. It is not a *sin*, like anarchy—it is not a *delusion*, like fanaticism. It belongs to the nature of things.

It is likely to urge its claims and to agitate society, so long as evil and imperfection exist. The only difficulty is to define Reform—to ascertain its true limits, its legitimate work. The veriest Conservative in the world may say—"Well, I believe in Reform;" but the movement that is taking place never happens to be the Reform that he believes in. The wildest schemer answers that he goes "for nothing but Reform;" although he brandishes his torch over a magazine that at the first explosion will blow up him and thousands more, and shatter, perhaps, the whole framework of society.

We are led, then, at this point, to discuss our second question—*What is Reform?* I answer to this, that Reform comprises both the ideas of *purification* and of *advancement*. Purification implies a restoration to a normal condition, or a remodeling of what we already have—but not the addition of any thing new. In order to purify, we may have to go back, instead of forward—back to a primitive state of things, and instead of increasing our possessions may have to reduce their number. But this alone does not include the whole principle of Reform, since there must be not only an abolition of what is wrong, but *advancement*—advancement in what is right, and true, and good. We must ever acknowledge the

stern necessity of circumstances. These constantly bind our attention to *present* wants and *future* requirements, and are ever placing man and society in new positions. We may avail ourselves of experience, but we cannot go back into the Past to act. This earth will carry us and our's along with it, as it moves in its enormous orbit. And we are carried forward as much in *time* as in *space*. We leave the old landmarks of history, and come into the new fields of experiment—into a sphere that calls for new action. It may be true, then, that in some instances we must go back, but we go back only for *principles*; we must look around us, and look forward, for the application of those principles. We do well to strip off encumbrances, our corruptions and absurdities, and get back to the naked truth, since that always remains the same—but, when we arrive at that truth, we shall find that it needs to be applied to new circumstances. We may find the self-same truth our fathers used—a truth that we have forgotten, or have never known; but we cannot act upon that truth just as our fathers did. The primitive state of man may have been a state much more innocent than that in which we are now living, but if we reform our present condition, strip it of its vices and perversions, we cannot live in

all things just as the men in the primitive state lived. Purification, then, inasmuch as it implies only an abolition of existing evils, or a restoration to primitive truths, does not comprehend the whole principle of Reform.

Another idea, then, comes in here—the idea of advancement, growth, progress. We must purify but we must also *increase*, we must abolish but we must also *build up*, we must repent of wrong but we must also *grow in righteousness*. We know not all truth yet. Our fathers did not know all truth. The top of their Babel was not half so high as one of God's own mountains, and *we* can scarcely see beyond Sirius, or, at best, some dim nebulæ that hang upon the threshold of the firmament. New manifestations burst upon us almost every day. In the hallowed light of memory lies the truth of the *past*, but our eyes look into that gleaming vista that opens through the horizon before us, and we hear the voices of Prophecy saying—"Forward! Forward! much is yet to be revealed." And if we would have a true Reform, I say, we must seize the *new* truths as they come and apply them, as much as we would preserve the *old* truths and apply them. Man and society need not only to be purified, they need to progress; and that is the true Reform, which, purging them

from mighty and hoary evils, impels them forward with glorious developements.

We see, then, that in every true Reform, there is a *conservative* and a *radical* element—a *restorative* and a *progressive* principle. Of course, then, the strict Conservative and the strict Radical are both wrong—he who would cling to everything, and he who would uproot everything.

My objection to the strict CONSERVATIVE is, not that he holds back in the tide of Reform, but that he holds on to all things just as they are—and not merely to the *good* that is in all things. He loves existing institutions because they happen to exist, and for no other reason. He loves old customs because they *are* old, and he is very comfortable under them. Too often when we come to analyze his conservatism, the whole reason of it is found in sheer, downright *selfishness*. He hates to be disturbed. If the movement prevails he must move too, and he dislikes the exertion and the sacrifice. He has got a snug corner of the world, and ample means to live, and surely, he thinks, the world is well enough as it is. It is natural that *he* should think so. But the poor bondman, who labors in blood and tears, thinks that the world is *not* well enough as it is, and it is evident that there must

be some other criteria than the convenience of one man, or of one class of men.

Or, if the Conservative is not selfish, he is an alarmist, and as much deluded as the veriest fanatic. He exercises no discrimination. Every plan that is proposed to alter existing institutions, to him looks heretical and dangerous, because he will not set himself to work candidly to investigate the matter, but sees through his prejudices, and acts from his old habits of thinking. At the mere mention of the word *Reform*, vague ideas of unsettlement and confusion rush upon him; he sees all things in chaos—nothing but licentiousness and destruction, blood and flame; and, honestly scared, no doubt, he vociferates from the very depths of his lungs—"Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" This, you perceive, is all clamor and assumption. There is no idea either of *purification*, or of *advancement*. All things must remain as they are, for they are as good as they can be. And, moreover, there is evidently but little knowledge of, and therefore no confidence in, the Truth. The strict Conservative says that Truth is in danger. It is the idlest fear in the world. It plainly indicates no intimacy with the Truth. He who has communed with great principles, knows that they are everlasting, and that nothing can shake them

from their orbits. He may deplore the licentiousness that stalks abroad in the name of Liberty. He may wonder at the delusion that runs through the multitude like a contagious disease. He may mourn over the licentiousness and the sin that must take place ere the world shall secure the right and the good—at the bitter draught that men must drink ere they find the pearl of experience that lies at the bottom. But he has no fear for the truth. They who are alarmed, lest the world should be turned upside down, have but little reverence, and little faith. They fear man, more than they trust Omnipotence. The world turned upside down! Why, the world is hung upon a balance. Man cannot move it. With all his engines, with all his subtle inventions, he cannot move it a hair's breadth. And this, because it depends not upon mechanical forces, not upon the law of gravity—but because God hung it there!

My objection, then, to the strict Conservative is, that he allows no movement, either forward by way of *advancement*, nor backward by way of *purification*; but wants all things to remain as they are, which nature will not permit, since by her laws all things *move* in some way, either in growth, or decline. And I object to the Conservative, because with all his fears for

Goodness and Truth, he evidently knows but little of either, else he would exercise more discrimination, and while clinging to the *good* would let the *bad* go, and thus be a Reformer—and, also, he would be willing to trust truth in every encounter, knowing it to be eternal and omnipotent. I object to the Conservative, because he has no faith in progress—he too often acts from a selfish motive—he consults not his *reason*, but his *fears*.

The Conservative sometimes employs ingenious arguments to defend his position. But I deem them fallacious. He says, that he is willing to grant that society is somewhat out of joint, but, he asks—“how do I know that you will better these things? Your experiments,” he says, “may be dangerous. It is a fearful thing to tamper with the existing order. Your medicine may prove but a quack nostrum, and that which you give to cure may only aggravate the disease.” To this I answer, that we must act in such cases as we do in other matters. Because we sometimes fail, we do not therefore hesitate to make other experiments. Everything good and great is wrought in such trials—it is a law of our being. In this matter of Reform we must trust reason and common sense. We must believe our eyes and hands and intellects. We

may be assured of the correctness of a principle, of the truth and right of a plan, if we will. We can tell whether the bridge that shall cross the stream is safe or not. If it is made of straw it evidently is not—if made of wood, or stone, or iron, it probably is. The old quibble raised by Hume, as to how we know whether an article presented to us is what it appears to be, is more ingenious than sound; if we halted upon it we should soon stop the machinery of practical life. Although we may be often cheated by the false and the vile, we intuitively know the true and the right—for the true and the right will be recognized and found to be the same the wide world over. Experience furnishes us with many criteria, and reason will supply many more. We must not be rash; we must not adopt everything as it comes, but compare, reflect, examine—and fear not the result. And is it not better even to move at a *risk*, than not to move at all? This Conservative argument was as valid countless ages back, as it is now. And if men had heeded it, the race would be now where it was countless ages ago. But they did not heed it. They took a step forward—a step at a time, to be sure—but still a step forward, even though it was in the untried path of experiment. I do not like the legitimate bearings of this argument.

It will do as well for the Grand Turk as for the professed Republican—it will serve the high Tories of England, as well as any Conservative in this country. Enough, that reason decides after calm reflection. Enough, that all that intuitively recognizes the Good and the True, appeals in our bosoms. Enough, if we have these, to venture forward, even hazarding by experiment the issue which, at the worst, can produce evils scarcely more aggravated than those which already exist.

“But,” says the Conservative, “I have no faith in this doctrine of *Human Progress*. It is a chimera; to speak more coarsely but pointedly, it is a humbug. The race, to be sure, seems to advance at some points—but at other points it has retrograded; and I do not know, after the account is figured up, and the balance struck, but that it is best to let all things remain pretty much as they are.” Now let us clearly understand what is meant by *Human Progress*. It must be distinctly separated from the doctrine of *Human Perfectibility*. That men in this world will ever be, in all respects, perfect, is one doctrine—and that men will pass from lower degrees of excellence up to higher, and *maintain their advantage*, is another doctrine. This last is the doctrine of Human Progress. That our age holds

an amount of refinement and civilization that preceding ages did not have, seems evident. We may not see minutely how this operation of human progress goes on—we may not be able to trace the transfusion of the good and the true through every particle and member. But we see the *grand result*. So the great ocean comes on imperceptibly. Men build their huts at the foot of some huge mountain, and till the green fields that spread out before them—thinking nothing so permanent. But, by and by, *other* men come that way, and the green fields are all gone. The summer fruit has long since been gathered. Where the husbandman found his wealth, the fisher draws his support—where the sickles whispered to the bending corn, the ships of war go sheeting by—and the old mountain has become a grey and wave-beaten crag, a landmark to the distant mariner, and a turret where the sea-bird screams.

But this was accomplished *imperceptibly*. One generation may not have witnessed the advancement of the waters—another may have passed away without noting it; but slowly they kept advancing. And by and by, all men saw it—saw the *grand result*, though they did not mark each successive operation. So with human progress. One age may scarcely perceive it, and another

may die without faith in it; but we must take some distant period that is not too closely blended with our time, and compare that with the present, and in the *grand result* we shall discover that there has been human progress.

Still, some may say, "Yes, there has been progress, but not over the whole world—there have been salient points, but also retreating angles, and when you speak of *human* progress you must appeal to the world at large—say, has *that* advanced?" I answer, that in the world, somewhere, there has been a constant tendency to advancement. Even the dark times have been seasons of fruition—the middle ages nourished and prepared glorious elements of human reformation. If one nation has lost the thread of advancement, another has taken it up—and so the work has gone forward; if not in the race, as a whole, at any one time, yet *in the race somewhere*. But the race is fundamentally the same, and what may be predicated of a portion of mankind as belonging essentially to humanity, may be predicated of the whole, and so in the advancement of a *portion* of the race, the *whole* becomes hopeful. *The capacity of the race for progress has been demonstrated.* Is that capacity never to be gratified? Though the period never has been that all the race were at the same time

on the same level—who shall say that the time never will come? That it never can come? Who shall say, so long as the capacity exists, how quick the transfusion of what is excellent in one portion may be made through the whole? A victory over the formal Asiatic, grim and bloody as it is, may be one agent of such transfusion. A triumph of machinery may help to accomplish it. The steam-car may carry truth and light over drifted deserts and frozen mountains. The march of opinion, aided by circumstances, may penetrate to lands that never knew the commerce of Phœnicia, or the wisdom of Athens—where Alexander never ventured with his hosts, and where Cæsar turned back his eagles. This is the main point—not *universal* progress, but *human* progress—not progress *everywhere*, but progress *somewhere*. Grant but that, and all humanity becomes hopeful—grant but the capacity, and the doctrine is practicable—let the law be in operation only at one point, still it is a *law*, and as such is to be heeded and acted upon. Old notions may die, but new notions shall spring up. Let the *principle* be at work, and no one can limit the result. It may take a longer sweep of ages than have yet passed over mankind, to bring all nations to the same point of advancement; some nations, now here and

now there, may always be in advance of others, yet if the others advance also, the great law will be in operation. And no people shall have lived or died in vain. Into the deepest sepulchres of the Old and the Past a new life shall be kindled, showing that they have not waited so long for nothing. Dim Meroe will shout freedom from beyond the fountains of the Nile, and the stony lips of the Sphynx shall preach the Gospel!

At least, let me say to the Conservative, that if there is progress where he stands, he is bound to act upon that progress. His croaking is of no worth at all—his action may at least accomplish some present good. Grant that, in the end, it shall come to naught. *Now* it is progress, *now* it is improvement. Let him strive to promote that improvement. Enough, that the age in which he lives, and the people with whom he is associated, are asking for light. Let him admit the light, and not speculate, as to whether the light will go out ages after he is dead. Let him not peer through all the corners of the earth, and point to all the sleeping nations as an argument why his own should sleep also.

With this I dismiss the Conservative and his arguments, and pass to consider the strict RADICAL, who, I say, is also wrong. He who wages war with all existing institutions, is as bad as

he who holds on to all existing institutions—perhaps worse. There is always some good to be preserved. To think otherwise, is to calumniate the past, and deny the Agency of Providence. In order to reform, it is not necessary nor practicable, to level all existing institutions to the dust at one stroke, and drive the ploughshare over them. If they do not actually think so, there are some men who speak as if they owed nothing to the Past or the Present—as if these were naught but hindrances to human progress. But if I understand progress, it is the *gradual* passage from one condition to another, each link in the chain being necessary to the consummation. If human nature grows, it must have something to grow out of, and therefore it is indebted to that something. Your Reform will not create itself, nor will it be born mature, nor can it be produced in the impalpable air. You must use what exists in order to build up what shall be. If you strike away every vestige of the past and the present, upon what will you stand for the future? No—no—you cannot get out of the world in order to move the world. You must stand upon this old firm earth *just as it is*, and try to make it *better*. The plant that shall blossom unto an immortal flowering, must assimilate to itself elements that have been win-

nowed in the storms and changes of the Past. The harvest of human effort, and hope, and prayer, will spring up in the furrows of by-gone revelations, out from the embers of sin, and the ashes of martyrdom, and the soil of blood-soaked battle-fields.

To the strict Radical I object, moreover, that if he does not actually seek thus to destroy at once all existing organizations, he often does what amounts to the same thing. He attempts to introduce principles and institutions that are impracticable, because they are fitted for an entirely different state of things, for an advanced era of humanity, for a golden age, a time of perfection. But between our present state and such an elevated condition, a wide space intervenes. Every inch of ground, between this point and that, is to be trodden gradually. His Reform is impalpable, because it does not connect with what has gone before—we cannot reach it from where we stand—and if we would advance to it, we have nothing to advance upon. It is premature, and, not regarding the Past and the Present, is the same as if it rejected them. I think that many radicals are of this class. There are some, I presume, who disgrace every attempted Reform—who seek to overturn all things in order that they may gratify their revenge and their

lusts. But these are vile men, who do not listen to reason. But, I say, many are of the class to which I just alluded. They are virtuous but dreamy. They speculate too much. Their philosophy may be very good, but they want common sense. Their logic is sound so long as we confine it to abstract principles, but it cannot stand the ordeal of stubborn *facts*. We may hope for the future, but we must act in the present. We cannot forestall nature, nor renovate society by steam.

Again ;—your Radical is frequently a mere grumbler. His sole function, in that case, seems to be, *finding fault*. He has a shrewd wit, perhaps, and cultivates a sharp satire, which are often effectual, and sometimes amusing. It makes us laugh when he shakes some respectable old rottenness, or when decently-clothed sin winces at his punctures. But, after all, this is an unamiable and unprofitable function. It is the easiest thing in the world to find fault. It requires no great power to pull down, or to pick in pieces. He who takes away without giving something instead, performs no grateful office. If you take from a poor man his ragged cloak, and give him no other clothing, he will hardly call you his benefactor. Now the true Reformer not only removes the bad—he gives us something better.

He has not only "a torch for burning, but a hammer for building." At least he will have pity for the evils that he cannot help, and while he bears them with meek humility, will ever look forward with hope and faith. The fault-finding Radical knows not the true spirit of Reform. This seeks to build up, to develope, knowing that in this way evil is best destroyed. It will not pluck the crutch from the cripple—but will seek to heal his lameness. It will not undermine the faith of childhood's simple hymn, but will anoint its lips, and teach its faltering voice to flow in deep and sweet hosannas.

But, let me say further, the Radical often manifests a bad spirit. He talks much of philanthropy with his lips, but his heart cherishes bitterness. He speaks of reason and kindness; but as often vociferates and declaims. He complains of persecution, but is very intolerant. He is boastfully confident of the strength of his opinions, but frets and fumes if any one opposes him. He professes to love the race, but denounces the world, because it misunderstands or will not believe him. He is as busy, and as spiteful, as a wasp. This is not the spirit of the true Reformer. He is calm and mild, mighty against sin, hurling burning truths at every wrong; but still preserving, amid it all, a loving

heart. He is fearless and unfaltering—he presses right on with his mission; but he does not court persecution, or pray for martyrdom. He is contented to let Truth bide its time, and is careful that he does not injure it by rashness and *impropriety*, as much as by sluggishness or denial. He will not be angry if men do not believe him at the first announcement. He is contented if he may only preach the truth, for he knows that once scattered abroad it can never die. It may not blossom until long after he is dead—but what of that? The summer rains and winter snows shall work for it; and, long after his voice is hushed, and his eye dark, his very dust shall nourish it—for it will blossom at last! Such is the *true* Reformer. You see that the rash and angry Radical differs in much from him.

I find, then, in strict Radicalism, as many objections as I do in strict Conservatism. The one holds on to all things, the other would destroy all things—the one will not move at all, the other moves too fast—the one is too complacent, the other too dissatisfied—the one denounces all who go from him, the other is angry with all who will not come to him.

But now between all this there is a *middle course*, in which a true Radicalism and a true Conservatism combine. There is such a thing

as REFORM. We have seen that it is a legitimate principle ever working in the souls of men. The errors and woes with which we are surrounded, are not meant to abide. This reign of blood and violence, is it destined to last for ever? These shams that appear on dusty parchment, in feudal distinctions, and legal wrongs, shall they not one day dissolve and pass away? Absolute Conservatism is false to our better nature, to our hopes and our capacities. But this true Reform works by a law of nature, and, like all nature's laws is not to be accelerated, or counterfeited. Slowly must the work go on—yet it will go on. It is life, it is reality—dreams and speculations are not it. The Good, the Good alone, it labors to secure—the Good that is in the past, the Good that is in the future. It labors to remove evil by *purification*, and by *advancement*. It holds on to the hallowed that has gone before—it reaches out to the true that is to come. The spirit of true Reform, neither too fast, nor too slow, both conservative and progressive, may be described, with a slight alteration, in the words of Goëthe.

“ Like as a star
That maketh not haste,
That taketh not rest,
Is it ever fulfilling
Its God-given hest.”

Thus, my friends, I have given you some crude ideas upon the PHILOSOPHY OF REFORM. I thought it would not be uninteresting, nor unprofitable, to analyze somewhat, that about which so much is said in our day—concerning which so many exaggerated hopes and groundless fears are entertained. Let us not be anarchists—let us not be alarmists. Let us be REFORMERS—that is upbuilders; neither absolute Conservatives, nor absolute Radicals, but laborers for the Good wherever we find it—having faith in Reform. Let us not suppose that our age can do everything, or that men are about to become perfect. Neither let us fear that the world will be turned upside down, nor deem that all things are best as they are. Let us have our harness on, ready when the trumpet sounds to do the best we can for the Right, the Good, and the True.

But having thus decided for the legitimacy of Reform, I must not pause without asserting the ground on which my faith in its success is founded. The great Element of Reform is not born of human wisdom; it does not draw its life from human organizations. I find it only in CHRISTIANITY. "Thy Kingdom come!" There is a sublime and pregnant burden in this Prayer. It is the aspiration of every soul that goes forth in the

spirit of Reform. For what is the significance of this Prayer? It is a petition that all holy influences would penetrate and subdue and dwell in the heart of man, until he shall think, and speak, and do good from the very necessity of his being. So would the institutions of error and wrong crumble and pass away. So would sin die out from the earth. And the human soul, living in harmony with the Divine Will, this earth would become like Heaven. This Kingdom of God upon earth is no unsubstantiality—it covers no narrow field. It is the perfection and the meaning of that which we see, however dim and distant, in all true Reforms. When it comes, the rage of war shall cease,—the inequalities of rank shall vanish, the chains of the slave will be broken, and the feet of the oppressor will rest on the neck of his fellow no longer. And the din and the clamor that have rocked society for ages, and the woes that have heaved its heart so long, will be no more. These will all pass away, and be still—like the night and the storm, when the summer-morning descends upon the mountains, the vallies, and the sea.

It is too late for Reformers to sneer at Christianity—it is foolishness for them to reject it. In it are enshrined our faith in human progress—our confidence in Reform. It is indissolubly

connected with all that is hopeful, spiritual, capable in man. That men have misunderstood it and perverted it, is true. But it is also true that the noblest efforts for human melioration have come out of it—have been based upon it. Is it not so? Come, ye remembered ones, who sleep the sleep of the Just, who took your conduct from the line of 'Christian Philosophy—come from your tombs, and answer! Come Howard, from the gloom of the prison and the taint of the lazar-house, and show us what Philanthropy can do when imbued with the spirit of Jesus. Come Elliott, from the thick forest where the red-man listens to the Word of Life—come Penn, from thy sweet counsel and weaponless victory; and show us what Christian Zeal and Christian Love can accomplish with the rudest barbarism and the fiercest hearts. Come Raikes, from thy labors with the ignorant and the poor, and show us with what an eye this Faith regards the lowest and least of our race, and how diligently it labors, not for the body, not for the rank, but for the plastic soul that is to course the ages of immortality. And ye, who are a great number—ye nameless ones—who have done good in your narrower spheres, content to forego renown on earth; and, seeking your Reward in the Record on High, come and tell us how kindly a spirit,

how lofty a purpose, or how strong a courage, the Religion ye professed can breathe into the poor, the humble, and the weak.

Go forth, then, Spirit of Christianity, to thy great work of REFORM! The Past bears witness to thee in the blood of thy martyrs, and the ashes of thy saints and heroes. The Present is hopeful because of thee. The Future shall acknowledge thy omnipotence!

DISCOURSES.

DISCOURSE I.

THE TRUE GROUND OF CHRISTIAN UNION.

*Preached in the Bleecker street Church, New York,
Sabbath morning, January 15th, 1843.*

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

JAMES i. 27.

OUR time is distinguished for its moral and Benevolent associations. Some of these are distinct and sectarian. To them I have now no reference. Others are Catholic and Philanthropic in their character. These assume a peculiar interest. In this interest consists not alone the fact that they are developements of the present age. Here we might ground some cheering hopes, and indulge in many pleasing speculations. It is a great truth that bursts upon us in this nineteenth century, that the condition of humanity, taken in the mass, is more hopeful than ever it was before. The wave of human experience, that has rolled

through so many night-like ages, bearing upon its bosom blood and weapons and chains, is fast gliding now in blessed light that bursts through the rifts of the breaking clouds, and issues far up in the serene heaven.

But, I say, these associations assume an interest to us, not only from the indications which they present of human developement and human progress, but because below them seems to lie this fact—that, *in these associations Christians find a common ground, and a common ground of wide extent too, to meet upon.* Is it not an interesting question to ask—What will be the effect of the Philanthropic movements of our day, in bringing together Christian hearts, and in securing Peace and Union to the Christian Church?

Let us look a little at the interesting aspect which these associations present. The fundamental principle upon which they rest is PRACTICAL BENEVOLENCE. Now this is something plain and tangible. The Presbyterian takes his Bible, and cannot find therein the Doctrine of Universal Salvation—he thinks he discovers, instead, the doctrine of Endless Misery, and may verily believe he does God service, by proclaiming his brother a grievous heretic, and excluding him from the Communion Table. But he goes out on Anniversary day, to the Prison

Discipline Society, or the Temperance association, and lo! there he meets the Universalist, and sits side by side with him, and unites with him in cordial, energetic action. The Unitarian cannot find the mystery of the Trinity in the Record; nor can the Methodist, or the Baptist, discover any thing less than the Supreme God-Head of Jesus; but the Anniversary comes round, and lo! Unitarian and Methodist, and Baptist and Quaker, they are all *there*, speaking, voting, working, like men and like brothers. Now here is something not altogether meaningless and uninteresting. It is plain that each of these men being a Bible reader and a Bible disciple, each has found something there that brings him to the Anniversary, and that bring them together. What is it? Why the Injunction of PRACTICAL BENEVOLENCE—the great Law of Love to man breathing all through the Gospel, seen in every lineament of Jesus, and discovered in that Precept which says—“Visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.”

Here, then, I say, is a common ground of Christian Union, and a ground of no mean extent. The field is as broad as the world—the ties of unity are as strong as the affections of the human heart. We cannot all believe the same thing—we cannot all worship in the same form; but

we know what charity is, and what human brotherhood is, and what, in its Essence, Christianity is—and it is a great thing to hold so much in common.

Now a union of Christians on a common ground of Faith, never has taken place, and probably never will take place. It has been tried. It has made many hypocrites, and many formalists, and induced much ignorance and superstition. The Romish hierarchy tried this—the union of the Church on the ground of a common Faith. The Reformation exploded that idea. It will never be attempted again. Of course, I do not mean here that there is no one article of belief or that there are not articles in which all will agree. From the necessity of things *Christians* must believe in God and in Christ. But when I allude to the ground of Faith, I refer to the sectarian points. I do not think that men will ever come together upon one Creed-platform, if that platform contains exclusively the views of any one sect, or the peculiar views of all the sects. I do not think that all men will ever be, speculatively, Presbyterians, or Methodists, or Baptists, or Unitarians, or Universalists. In *heart*, in *action*, they may be all that is good in all these systems. But they will never, probably, unite on one ground of *Faith*. We shall never have a Catho-

lic Church so far as belief is concerned—a Church whose creed shall be alike for the young and for the old, for the untutored and for the enlightened mind, for the mind of the nineteenth and the mind of the twenty-ninth century. Is it not time that we had given up this idea?

But, you may say—“if this is so, why preach at all your peculiar views?” For this reason, to be sure—that *we* believe those views to be true, and hope to make them widely prevalent. But this is a different thing from excluding all from the Christian name who will not adopt our views—this is a different thing from making our views essential, absolutely essential to the Christian *character*. Now this has been the fault of the sects. They have made their peculiar views of Christian doctrine essential to Christian character—have denied men the Christian name and Christian communion, and called them *heretics* and *infidels*, because they did not adopt their views. And, I ask, is it not time that we gave up this practice of un-christianizing all men who cannot adopt our peculiar articles of Faith? Is it not time that we looked for some broader, deeper principle of union than any one set of tenets? The chain is too scanty, the links are too few—it cannot embrace all the tongues and tribes and kindreds of true Christendom. The

bond must spring from the heart, not from the brain—must be a bond of practice, not of sectarian Faith—must live in the affections, not the reason.

I am not too sanguine. I know how bitter the opposition to all this is. I know what a firm seat bigotry and ignorance yet have in the human soul. It is enough to make one cry out, not with indignation, but with pain, at the miserable narrowness of some of our *Christians*. It was some time since, that I looked over a Religious paper, in which was given an account of Revivals, and once or twice it was mentioned that such a man was “a profane man, a Universalist”—“a drunken man, a Universalist;” or something equivalent. Thus Universalism was classed with profaneness and drunkenness, as if these are its necessary adjuncts. Now this is very narrow. We will call it ignorance, but surely we ought not to boast much of our “age of light,” if such ignorance is widely extended. It ought to be known, if it is not known, that there is no necessary connection between Universalism and drunkenness and profaneness. Why, a man *may* believe God is his Father and Benefactor—that he is bound to Love Him by the dearest and holiest ties; I say, it is *possible* that a man should believe thus, and yet not pro-

fane God's Name—why should he? A man *may* believe that Intemperance mars and crushes the physical, intellectual and moral man, bringing ruin, sorrow and death, and yet, although believing in the final salvation of all men, not be a drunkard—why should he? What necessary connection is there between the belief in the final salvation of all men, and drunkenness? Oh! it is petty, I had almost said it is *vile*—this low, narrow estimate of Religious opinions, and Religious men. What if I should indite an article, and say—such a man is a deacon in the Church, a sharper and a Baptist—such a man is a selfish, hard-dealing man and a Presbyterian—such a man is a licentious man and a Methodist; classing these terms together as matters of course? The whole community would feel outraged, and cry against it. But would it be any worse in this case, than it is in the other? Have there been profane and drunken Universalists? Very likely. So also have there been cheating Baptists, and selfish Presbyterians, and licentious Methodists. But what of that? Am I prepared to say that they were sharpeners, or misers, or rakes, just because they *were* Baptists, or Presbyterians, or Methodists? No!—far be it from me to detract from the good character that many, who live in consistency with their views, bear.

Now I know that there is a great deal of just such narrowness as this which I have illustrated, existing in the Christian Church. I know that in some sections an almost impenetrable veil, thicker than the wall between Jew and Gentile, hangs dark and unpromising among the sects. But, although things work gradually, there is always reason to hope and to be strong, when a *good principle* once gets foot-hold in the world. A true principle never dies. A grain of seed, sown in truth and holiness, *will* spring up to fruition—though it may be long, long ere it shall flower in its beauty, or spread its green leaves to the sun. Therefore, I have hope for Christian union from the benevolent movements of the day. They bring men of very discordant theologies together, in very harmonious and very extensive action. And though they may not, by any means, develope *all* of Religion, they reveal, in glimpses, much of what true Religion, true Christianity, is. And so we find that in true Practical Religion we can unite, though not in speculative tenets. And this will help men to know each other better—to see more and more of one another—to find how much of good, deep, *heart-Religion* there is in all, and to find that it will make sweet music enough in Heaven, up among the harps and the Angels, though the tide

of song to God and the Lamb comes mingling from the lips of Presbyterian and Methodist and Baptist and Universalist. And so, by and by, there will be less misrepresentation, less abuse, more respectful treatment towards one another; and, gradually, men will find that in *Practical Religion*—in visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and in keeping themselves unspotted from the world—there is a bond of union deep as the soul, wide as the race, beautiful like Heaven, holy like Christ. And one will say to another—"my brother, I have sinned against thee. I thought in the little parchment creed that my fathers gave me was the test of true Religion—and I called thee hard names. But now, I have learned my error. I see that Christianity is not a *dogma* but a *life*. Come, and here, where our Master's broken Body and his shed Blood are manifested by not inappropriate emblems of his rent and divided Church, here we will commune together, as we hope to when we see him Glorified, and behold in each other the same lovely Image."

My friends, I said I am not sanguine, and therefore I only *speculate* upon what will be a very natural effect of the associated benevolent action of the day. In these organizations, as I have already remarked, we get glimpses of much

of what Christianity really is. Now men, in all ages of the Church, have been prone to seal up the Religion of the Gospel in articles and forms. The controversy has all been about these. One of the first discussions in the Christian Church was about circumcision, about Jewish forms. But Christ did not come to announce to men that they must be circumcised, or abstain from such and such meats. He came to shed abroad in men's hearts the Kingdom of Heaven, which "is not meat or drink, but righteousness, and joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost." Men have sought to make Christianity depend upon the belief that a wafer was actually Christ's Body—that the Pope was infallible. Men have sought to make Christianity hinge upon the point that Christ is very God and very man—that Endless Misery is the Revealed Will of God respecting a portion of the human race—that Baptism is essential to Salvation. And so they have sat down at separate tables, and have cast angry glances at each other, and thundered long and loud from the pulpits, and met each other coldly in the streets, and filled newspapers and pamphlets, yea, books and libraries, with controversial abuse. But is all this Christianity? No more than the raiment is the body, or the meat the life. Christianity is a *Life*, and every devout and loving

heart has felt it, no matter what its name, or sect. Men have not evinced their Christianity when sitting in a certain Church, or worshipping in a certain form, or holding to articles of Faith with the *head* merely. The old heathens could do all this; and what better, therefore, are we than they? What *peculiarity* was there in Christianity, if this was all that it came to teach? But when men have gone out and visited the fatherless, when they have resisted the temptations and overcome the sins of the world, then have they manifested Christianity—then have they shown what it is.

This being so, it will be seen at a glance, that all sects have, in fact, acknowledged *fundamental* Christianity. There has never been a sect that has denied the necessity and the beauty of a life of holiness and goodness. There has never been a sect that has not seen that Christ is the Teacher of Holiness and Goodness. If, then, all sects practice that Holiness and Goodness, will they not meet on one common ground? And, I ask, are not the movements of the present day fast tending to develope this fact that all sects believe in what is truly vital and practical in Christianity? I think so. Here for the poor inebriate—here for the bond-slave—here for the cruelly-treated criminal—here for the suffering poor;

we can act, and hope, and pray together. And do not think that there is no *Religion* in this. It has been the fallacy of men, that they have too lightly prized this every-day, practical Goodness. But such was the way that Jesus lived—in every-day, practical Goodness. Men have been prone to limit Religion to the Church, to the Closet, to Reading, Meditation, and Retirement—and to think too little of taking hold of the evils of humanity, of visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction—of cherishing a loving heart and manifesting a loving life. But the age is correcting this error. The dark clouds of strife and smoke are breaking away. Far through the opening vista of rent devices and broken symbols, like the heaving billows of a mighty sea, the tide of Christian Philanthropy is rolling on. Men of all sects are there. The Catholic is there with his Crucifix pressed to his bosom. The Methodist comes on, singing the sweet hymns of Wesley. The Baptist brings his robe of immersion. The Presbyterian stands upright, as his iron fathers did of old, to pray in simple reverence and freedom. The Universalist chants his anthem of restoration and holiness. But they stand shoulder to shoulder. They all point upward, earnestly upward, to that great Banner which waves over all—whose device is

the Crucified Jesus—whose inscription all over in letters of blessed light is his last Command—“*Love one another ;*” is the spirit of his pure and undefiled Religion—“*Visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, keep yourselves unspotted from the world.*”

Thus, I say, my friends, in the benevolent associations of the day, we discover a glowing hopefulness, and the kindlings of a grand and cheering truth. We may see, that not only do they promise well for man—for the lowly, and desolate, and down-trodden ; but they reveal *the true ground of Christian Union*, which is not a unity of Faith, but a unity of *heart and life*—a practical unity. And, viewed in this light, are not the benevolent movements of the age indeed encouraging ? Do they not call for the Blessings and Prayers of all good men ?

With two or three remarks, I will close this subject. And,

First ;—I have not been recommending a mere outward, dry-husk morality. “*Pure Religion,*” the Text says—“*Pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this—.*” I know there is a *form* of morality, an outward, decent aspect of living, while to all devout feeling, and to all true, inward life, the heart is a stranger. But I understand this to describe an ardent love

to man—a zealous philanthropic action for human relief and human improvement. And not only so. I understand it to demand a freedom from sinful desires and sinful conduct—a keeping unspotted from the evil of the world. The whole requirement in the Text, then, is nothing less than loving man with a heart sanctified by love to God—a soul growing and developing in righteousness. So it is no dead, worldly matter. It is spirit, and it is life. I know there is no gloomy mystery about it. It is a calm, consistent, benevolent living. It will make a man feel that to be Religious, he must carry his Religion out—must apply it. These, it would seem, are too often sowing their Religion only for another world, feeling that in *this* they have nothing particular to do. It is a mistake. We have souls here as much as we shall have hereafter. This is one sphere of the soul's action, the vestibule, it is true, of grander and higher realities, but still, I say, one sphere of the soul's action—this every-day world. Go out, then—visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction—do good, absolute, practical good, simple and ordinary as the work may seem ; and keep yourselves unspotted from the world. This is *Practical Christianity*—the Christianity which all sects have acknowledged, and the ground whereon

they will finally meet, if they meet at all—nay, the ground, whereon, even now, in some degree, they are coming together.

Again;—I have not spoken thus because I value lightly doctrinal views, or would sacrifice, or compromise mine. No, I value them too highly. They make this great and shifting order of things too harmonious and cheerful, for me to give them up, and they seem too intimately connected with the welfare of man for me to keep them back. And, at the risk of being called *dogmatic*, I must say that I think these are the views that will tend to bring about the wished for state of things, that are calculated to make men value practical Christianity, and feel the importance of true morality, and the significance of human brotherhood. These principles may not be acknowledged, they may not be understood, but, I think, like leaven they are to some extent working in the hearts of all Christians. And under their influence Christian sects may finally come together, not in speculative Faiths, not by the sacrifice of opinion, but in *heart*, in *love*, in *action*—as all the disciples of Christ should. Peter may think circumcision necessary, and Paul count it of little worth; and yet both may be good disciples of Jesus, and entitled to seats at the Table of the Common

Master. Can we believe that the Church is always to be rent asunder, and agitated by internal conflicts? After it has passed through this phase for a time, may it not come out, beautiful in the robe of Practical Religion, with the symbol of primeval brotherhood upon its bosom, with love in its eye, and peace on its brow? Oh! here, after all, may be the ground whereon God has ordained that Christian union shall take place—the ground of Practical Benevolence, good-will to men. We can all unite here. Let us hope and pray for this union. We may not see it. We may be called heretics all our days, and bear the brand of odium, and be denied the Christian Name. But hope still for that consummation. Hope still that the time shall come, when Christianity shall take the place of Sectarianism, and the Gospel as it was ushered in by Angels, shall be responded to, by the hearts of its children—“Glory to God in the Highest: on earth, peace, good-will towards men!”

And, finally, let us consider, my friends, the force which the text has upon us. It tells us *what* Religion is. It is not a curious treatise, this Text—a fragment of abstract Philosophy, it is of personal and vital interest. It tells us to be pure and undefiled; it tells *you* and *me* to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction;

it tells *you* and *me* to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Let us heed it. Let us act upon it ; and so come into the company of all the sainted and the just, who with conflicting views of doctrine, have had but one great element of Practice—indwelling Religion.

DISCOURSE II.

INTOLERANCE.

*Preached in the Orchard street Church, New York,
Sabbath afternoon, January 15th, 1843.*

— Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.—
LUKE ix. 55.

AMONG the many topics appropriate to our times, I select for the present occasion, the subject of INTOLERANCE. It appears to me that this sentiment is somewhat rife among us, and it seems to be the sentiment rebuked in the Text —“ Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” You recollect the circumstances. Jesus was journeying towards Jerusalem. In the course of his travel he came to a village of the Samaritans. They did not receive him. They were hostile towards the Jews, and the spirit of Intolerance exhibited itself. For, why would they not receive Christ? For no other reason than simply because his face was set to go to Jerusalem, the city of those with whom they were at strife. Here, I say, was the spirit of Intolerance. But it did not end here. The

disciples, James and John, caught the flame, and they broke out—"Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, as Elias did?" But they addressed a Being now in whom such an earthly and unholy passion could not dwell. "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," said he;—"For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And calmly he went on to another village.

But this rebuke was not alone for that group on the road to Jerusalem. Wherever man is bitter and revengeful against his erring or dissenting brother, no matter how eminent his standing, how ardent his professions, how commendable his zeal, this suggestion comes to him with all its force;—"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." It is, doubtless, a rebuke that needs to be heeded in this age. We do not hang Quakers, we do not exile Baptists, we rear no Inquisition, we sharpen no martyr-stakes—but these are only *forms*. The *spirit* of Intolerance may live, though the power of advancing Freedom and Christianity may deprive it of its faggot and its axe. The wrong *sentiment*, the deep, bad *motive*, these are what Christianity aims at. Away down into the caverns of the human heart, it looks with its piercing eye, and

if a chafed and hostile feeling is *there*, it is enough for its rebuke and its discipline. The red lightning did not come down from heaven, according to the impulses of the Disciples, and therefore no outward evil was accomplished. But the bad spirit was alive—the bitter, revengeful motive; and Christ saw it and reproved it. Now, then, because I see different sects allowed the rights of conscience, because Churches of every name point their glittering spires to heaven, because opinions are freely broached, and topics openly discussed, and loud professions of philanthropy and busy movings of zeal are all around me, I am not therefore convinced that there is no Intolerance. I say, the *form* of Intolerance may be different—it may not be the Papal Interdict, the thumb-screw, or the rack, but it may lie in Jesuitical arts, in whispered calumnies, in slanderous words, in angry, violent philippics. In short, as it has come to be the peculiarity of the age not to war with weapons of steel, nor to attack with physical force, so much as to speak through arguments, pamphlets, books and moral influences; so as the sword and the torch were used by Intolerance in that past age, when the sword and the torch were fashionable—this age may see intolerance clothed in the meek garments of modern Christian professors, peeping

out from "highly respectable and virtuous" circles, and speaking in the anger of the impatient conservative, or the zeal of the enthusiastic reformer. Let me, then, speak of Intolerance as something still existing, and therefore as something of which it is still appropriate to speak.

I. Of Religious Intolerance. If this spirit of intolerance is unamiable any where, especially is it when found in connection with the Name of Christ. And yet I know of no sphere where it seems rooted so deep, or where it kindles so high, as upon the subject of Religion. This excommunication for a difference of opinion, this perfect hatred that *seems*, at least, to exist not only towards *opinions* but *men*, this dividing of the Church of Jesus into hostile sects—is it like a manifestation of that Teacher, who came to gather men to a knowledge of one Father—to the fold of one Shepherd? And yet, where will you find more bitter warfare than that which is waged for Religious Doctrines? Where see more ridicule and aspersion than in the columns of the Religious newspaper? Where find more coldness or alienation than among Christians of different views? Now there must be some cause for this Intolerance. And it appears to me that it may arise in part, at least, from a misconception, and this misconception seems founded on

the idea that a particular *Belief* is essential to Christian *Character*. Now I wish to be understood upon this point. All must agree that Faith in Christ is absolutely necessary to entitle a man to the name of Christian. But within this avowal of Christian Faith how wide may be the diversity of knowledge, of reasoning power, of disposition! These may all lead to different views of the Savior's Doctrines, and to different perceptions as to what are and what are not his Teachings. And yet I affirm that no one can truly see Christ, and drink in the Influence of his Character, and not be a Christian at heart. And there is no one sect in the ample field of Christendom, that has not Christian Truth enough to kindle Christian Life in its members. Let me say again by way of explanation, that I do not wish men to be indifferent to doctrines, or to sectarian views. In the glow of generous and truly Christian feeling, men will often say—"Well, it makes no difference about doctrines, provided the heart is right." It does make a difference—and the difference is just as wide as the gap between Truth and Error. It makes this difference—that the soul that imbibes an erroneous instead of a true doctrine, is less happy, and less advanced in its true life, than it might be. Still, there is truth at the bottom of

the expression—"It makes no difference what a man believes;" and it lies at the point at which I am now arriving. The meaning of it is this—that the Truth is worth but little unless it produce its fruits, and, if it produce its fruits, this is the chief end; and there is a conviction in saying this, that in all sects there is Truth enough to produce good fruits. And I say so too. In every Christian denomination, there is enough of vital, kindling Christianity to make good hearts. No one can sit at the foot of the Cross, as a devoted, earnest disciple, and not feel the light that rays out from it moving upon his soul. No one can take the simple Christian Law of Love to God, and love to man, and go by its guidance, and yet be an immoral man. No one can stand by that cleft rock, and that irradiated Tomb, and not believe that Religion appeals to something deeper than time and sense, to which we must awake, and for which we must strive. These are indisputable Facts, first principles, that are tacitly admitted by all who assume the Christian name. But, I say, this matter is not virtually thus regarded by many sects. A man's variation in Christian Belief, is looked upon as a token of depreciated moral and Religious character. The unworthiness of such a disciple to approach the Communion Table is asserted upon

no other ground, and his probable moral conduct is traced to and linked with his Faith—and his faith, often, not as it really is, but as men see it with their eyes, colored as they may be by ignorance and prejudice. This, then, I repeat, would seem to be one cause of the spirit of Intolerance that prevails among various Christian denominations.

Again ;—we may trace this intolerant spirit back to the idea, that a man is actually to blame for being in error—that if he is in error he knows it all the while, and only persists in it from a perverse and wicked disposition. Hence, men are denounced for teaching such and such doctrines, are scolded at and sneered at—but not reasoned with, or pitied. If the gross assumption that I am right and you are wrong be admitted, without entering into the merits of the case, still, I know not why I should *abuse*, or *denounce* you. Surely, you may think you are right, and if it be a delusion to think so, still, it demands a labor of love, an effort of reason—not a display of intolerance. But how men will knit their brows, and vent their bitterness at the name of a *heretic* ! A Heretic ! Why, one would think, from the common sentiment, that a heretic was one who had not only unchristianized but *unmanned* himself—one going forth on purpose to

destroy and pollute, laying sacreligious hands on the holiest things from a spirit of sheer malignity and wickedness, and opposing himself to the received Faith from a scornful and sinful spirit. But now it is *possible* that a heretic may be a very different person from all this. He may be a meek seeker for Truth, blinded, perhaps, but sincere; he may be a man who has studied and thought, and who in conscience can not adopt the received ideas; he may be a man who nourishes all the Religious affections, who drinks Religion with a keener thirst, and from purer springs—or thinks he does—because he has thrown by what seemed to him impediments in the way to the Fountain-head—impediments to him, although to you they may be sacred articles of Faith. A heretic may be such a man as this, and surely he is not to be denounced and abused for all these peculiarities. And look ye, who burning with intolerance, would almost call down fire from heaven upon him, he may be, after all, farther advanced in Divine Truth and Divine Life than *you*, with all your faith, ancient and wide-spread as it is. Such a thing, I say, is *possible*.

But while intolerance like this would seem to fasten more particularly upon the Orthodox than upon the heretic sects—upon the con-

servative rather than the Reforming Religionist, it may be found with the latter, as well as with the former—and I think it will be found there in our day. The Samaritans in refusing to receive Jesus exhibited Intolerance, but the Disciples, in their turn, manifested the very sentiment that excited them. How common this is! The spirit we denounce, we oppose in the very same spirit. The boasting Liberal approaches the village of the Orthodox Samaritan, but he will have none of him, because his face is set in a suspicious direction. “What an intolerant bigot,” exclaims the liberal, “Oh! that I could call down fire from heaven.” Nay, but tell me, my friend, is there not more than *one* of you who is intolerant now? I deprecate persecution for heresy, then—but I equally deprecate the spirit in which the heretic deals out his accusations of “superstitious,” “bigoted,” “timid” and “time-serving.” I want no man abused because he rejects the Miracles, but I do not want him to abuse me because I hold to them. I affirm that it is unjust for the Orthodox professor to un-christianize the Universalist, but I maintain that it is just as wrong for the Universalist to call the Orthodox a hypocrite, or a dupe. And, I say, such a spirit as is manifested in the last-named illustration, is too rife in our day.

Such, then, is Religious Intolerance. I would that it were done away with. This is the union of Christians that I ask for. Not an identity of doctrine, not an indifference to articles of belief, not a worshipping in one place or one form—but a recognition of the great common humanity, of the right of opinion, of the oneness of the Christ-like Image seen through many human forms. Alas! we shall never have this sentiment, as the tide of thought and feeling runs at present. We shall never have this sentiment, until we rise to more intimate Communion with that One who could Bless even while men cursed, could heal while they smote, could Pray for them when they pierced; and even when turned from their homes and denied their hospitality, could say to those who breathed the bitterness of vengeance in his behalf—"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of—the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

II. Again;—I would allude to the spirit of Intolerance, as connected with our Philanthropic and Moral Reforms. Men may proclaim their love for their fellows, may be zealous in forming associations, may boast how consistently they stand upon the great Christian platform; but I would say to them—it is not only the work thou doest, but the *spirit* in which thou workest, that

will determine upon what platform you stand. The Christian Idea has been in the world a long time, but alas ! too little has the Christian Idea been suffered to accomplish. "A grain of wheat," said the Savior, "must first fall into the ground and die"—beautifully alluding to himself, but also giving an emblem of the fate of his Doctrine. That too has been buried—buried not so much beneath *persecutions*, as beneath *corruptions*. Free and glorious from the martyr's ashes and the martyr's blood, sprung the green harvest of the Church ; but when instead of the Martyr we had the Priest, instead of the sandalled Apostle the mitred Hierarch, then the Church became worldly, and the germ of Truth had to lie beneath the feet of the luxurious and the bigoted, until its fruit sprung forth again in some lowly and despised Reformer, that must also die ere he could give it life and diffusion. This has been the fate of the Christian Idea. It has not been carried out in the Christian *spirit*, and it could not develope without that. Men have met Pagan Relics with Christian Relics, heretic armies with Christian armies, ejection from Samaritan villages with Christian invocations of fire from heaven. "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of"—may not this be said to some even at this day, whose idea may

be true, whose premises may be right, but whose *instruments* are carnal and deadly?

Take the Temperance Reform. Is an Intolerant spirit right in this cause? You say yon man is a debased and polluted drunkard—you deem that rigid measures are the best for him. Nay but, my friend, what induced you in the first place to plead for Temperance? A love of your race, you say—your heart bled to see the miseries wrought by intoxication. But is this the end of your tenderness? Have you no mantle of Charity to cast over those tottering, blighted limbs? Have you nothing of the spirit of Him who could seek the healing of the moral leper covered all over with sin? Have you nothing of the love that can find something of the *common man* in that ruined clay, some fire that was kindled at a mother's breast in that hard heart, some chord almost but not quite dead? Ay, you can find this in the *drunkard*, but you can have no patience with him who deals out the liquid fire, and puts it to his parched lips. Nay, even here, I plead for tolerance—tolerance with the man, I speak not of his *business*. I ask no thunders of the law to smite that dealer, detestable as is his traffic. He too is a *man*, and, believe me, reason, the power of conscience, the law of love and right, shall touch even *him*. Forbear

thy fulminations of wrath. Perhaps he sees not even *yet* the force of thy argument. Perhaps the words that shall pierce his heart are already winging their way. But, at all events, be not intolerant. Trust reason, love, Christianity—these are the only agents for such a Reform.

I pass into the Anti-Slavery meeting: Here, I discover, is agitated a great truth—the natural equality of all men—the right of the poorest and lowest to be free, to breathe God's air upon what hill-top he will, to follow His sunshine around the earth if he list—the wrong of holding him in bondage, of putting him by force to do another's work. But the Idea and the spirit, at times, seem widely separated. The quondam Philanthropist now seems to struggle for words to express his sense not merely of the *traffic* but of the men who acknowledge it. They are hounds and murderers, he says—hard hearted and brutally wicked. I would say to him—Friend, this is not the legitimate spirit of thy Reform. Have some pity even for the slave-holder. Do not ever paint him as such a grim, ferocious monster. He too is a *man*. He may not have reasoned as far as thou. Many things may stand between him and the light. Be not so violent and sweeping in thy charges. His position may be the result of wrong reasoning, not of moral

obliquity. I have sat at the table of the slaveholder. I found him open and generous. I have slept beneath his roof with no fears of murder by him. I have been in the bosom of his family—I found there tender and beautiful affections, the sunshine of love, and the sentiments of chastity and reverence. I have opened the Records of our country's fame and his name was upon them. There are places of red battle for human rights,—his blood stained them. Thou mistakest thy work when thou callest him dog, murderer, monster. Conscience compels thee to speak the Truth, thou sayest—ay, but conscience does not compel thee to speak vindictively, and without discrimination. Thy true work is to love, to reason, to strive with moral suasion—not to spit out words of Philanthropy in drops of fire—not to cry, “Human Brotherhood! and cursed be all who do not say so with me.”

Thus, then, in our Philanthropic Reforms, let there be no intolerance. To those who cherish it, Christianity says—“Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.”

There is, however, another class who cannot brook the mention of Reform, or Reformers. To them such things are disagreeable. They feel pretty much as the sluggard does, when one somewhat rudely, with determined hands, says

to him—"sleep no more, it is time to rise." They think that the world is well enough as it is, and that no good can come of striving to alter present circumstances. This they say, because *they* are quite comfortable, and that, to *them*, is enough. But they must remember that there are many others in the world—they have innumerable brethren. These cry out against cold and hunger and moral deprivation, and there must be Reform. Those to whom Reform is an alarming cry, are ready to exclaim against every Reformer, as a low annihilator, a house-breaker, or a highway-robber—somebody who is bent upon disturbing order and introducing anarchy, upon uprooting society and giving reins to licentiousness—in short, as a very suspicious and fearful character. This too is intolerance. Listen to all the Reformer has to say. Seek not to prevent discussion, or to shut out petition. Accept what is reasonable, reject what is false, and fear not that Truth shall ever be destroyed. But, to denounce without hearing, to abuse because he touches some selfish chord, to call him fanatic and licentious, this is Intolerance—if ye do so, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of."

III. I would allude to one more manifestation of the spirit of Intolerance. I mean the manner in which we too often treat criminals and wrong-

doers. The *Crime*, I maintain, is to be abhorred and destroyed. But not so the *Criminal*. He is a man—he has a soul—the sympathies of our nature are not dead in him. I know, sometimes it would almost seem so. It would seem as if every spark of generous or virtuous fire that once may have burned in that heart, must long since have smouldered into obscene ashes. That gore-stained hand, that scarred brow, that lip all convulsed with derisive laughter, or twitching with hate and fiery scorn—"Oh! here is one to be crushed," you say, "loathed, blotted from existence, with all the terrors of the law, strong and bloody, heaped upon him." Not so—I affirm again, not so. Take that criminal, shut him up that he harm not his fellows, and then labor with him for a nobler end than destruction—*reformation*. It is man-like to crush and destroy—it is Christ-like to purify and build up. There is some hope for the most depraved. And if we were not so intolerant, thought more of the criminal as a *man*, thought more of reformation than revenge, we should smite upon that iron heart with words of love, patiently, unweariably, until we should find some pulse of good throbbing yet, perhaps, with the mystic beatings which it learned in some departed mother's arms. Holy memories of childhood shall rush upon that .

long-shrouded soul—voices of early innocence shall ring like Sabbath Church-bells long forgotten, calling him back to innocence and to peace. Such **things** have been. Can they not be again? At all events, I say, be not so intolerant towards the Criminal. Separate him more, in your mind, from his crime. Think of the associations which may have surrounded him from his younger days. Think of the want in which he was born, the vice into which he was baptized. Oh! it is the true Christian work to *Reform*. Christ died for all—for the very murderer at his Cross. Who says any man is hopeless, utterly degraded, fit only to be destroyed? He falters from the confidence of Christ. His revenge gets the better of his reason. He knows not what spirit he is of.

Let us not be intolerant, then, even to the Criminal. Let us secure ourselves and him from any more harm. Let us inflict a righteous retribution. But let us look upon the matter from a *Christian* point of view.

But, thus far, we have spoken of *Criminals*—men amenable to the severest retributions of the law—men whose deeds are of the blackest die. I pass from these to speak of the conduct of Society too often exhibited towards those who step aside from the path of virtue, under various cir-

cumstances. Let the offender be one who has been lured to ruin by villanous art and sinful fascination. How soon

“ The sharp scorn of men
On her once bright and stately head is cast ! ”

How quick the expanded brow gathers into a frown ! How soon the gentle mood of friendship is changed to unmingled loathing and contempt ! Is *all* this right ? Shall we never listen to the pleadings of charity ? Who can read that heart ? Who can trace its weary, fearful struggles ? Who knows the depth of the sharp agony that is preying upon it now ? Rejected, scorned, driven from the light of home—paternal lips open to discard—maternal hands raised to curse—hope withered in its spring-time—affection repelled and driven freezing to its fountain—the sanctity of woman’s sisterhood averted—the sneer of men quivering like sharp lightning on his face. Oh ! is there no room for *mercy* here—no hand of pity stretched out to restore—no Christian love that will yet seek to save ?

Again ;—some hitherto respected member of Society commits a wrong. How prone are we to jump at conclusions ! How eager to denounce ! There may be some palliation. At least, there is but the frailty of our common manhood. You and I had originally no patent of virtue in dis-

tion from the man who to day has fallen. Go back to his earliest temptation. See the first moment when it fastens upon him. See the first moment when that seemingly impregnable honor, yields to the subtle assault or the vigorous attack. Mark that rich treasure *self-respect*, as it dies out from the soul, long before the keen eyes of the uncharitable world detect a flaw. See the resolution and the struggle, the momentary victory and the relapse—the victim of sin, now nerved by old feelings of virtue, struggling “like a strong swimmer with his agony” and his shame—now listless and hopeless, like one who has gone too far to repent. And when the *overt* act is committed, and the staring world sees all, it overlooks the struggle, overlooks the temptation, it forgets the common frailty—it sees only the *vice*; and with an indignant feeling, as though its immaculate virtue were insulted, it cries out—“*Hunt him and hang him!*” I say this is Intolerance. I mean this disposition to show judgment without mercy, this relish for detecting faults, this lack of pity, this blind fury of revenge that as often does wrong as does the weak mercy that forgoes all. When we thus feel, truly is it, that we know not what spirit we are of.

I shall say nothing further at present upon

this subject of Intolerance. I have spoken only for Christian Love, only for Justice. I have not been pleading for error, for wrong-doing, for crime—but only that we should regard *the common manhood* that lies behind all error, and wrong-doing, and crime. Upon this manhood let us ever look, as upon something which contains a common element with ourselves, something to love, to labor and to pray for. How shall we do this? My friends, we must sit at the Feet of Christ, and drink in his great Law of Love. We cannot draw this Love from organizations, we cannot create it by associations—we must derive it from Christ, and then carry it into our associations. Men do not go to Christ for it, they go into associations without it, and hence the intolerance that abounds in the most professedly Philanthropic movements.

Christianity is against intolerance. She goes forth to conquest, yea to certain conquest, though the consummation may seem long delayed. But in going forth she rejects the torch and the axe, relying upon the omnipotence of Truth and Love. She has a battle to fight, a revolution to accomplish—but in fighting that battle she uses no carnal weapons, she invokes not the aid of War, cruel and vengeful War, that tramples its purple wine-press whose red clusters are human

hearts. She trusts the intrinsic Goodness of her cause, and the all-subduing power of her influence. And when that revolution is accomplished, the first will be last and the last first. She will pass by the sepulchres of Conquerors and Kings, to re-build and re-garnish the Tombs of the Prophets—she will pass by the bigot in mitre and in lawn, and elevate the poor widow who has labored contentedly in her sphere cherishing the flowers of holiness in her bosom. And she will abolish this war of creeds, and she will still this angry controversy. And she will gather the children of men into one great Temple, whose worship shall be Holiness, whose Creed shall be Love, whose dome shall open up into the illimitable universe of God. But ere this great work shall be accomplished, as one of the first conditions of its accomplishment, Intolerance, deep-rooted, bitter Intolerance must be eradicated from the hearts of men. Hearer, it must be eradicated from your heart and mine ere we are Christians indeed, ere we are fitted for the elements and the association of Heaven.

DISCOURSE III.

THE WORK OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE HUMAN SOUL.

*Preached in the Elizabeth street Church, New York,
Sabbath evening, January 15th, 1843.*

Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets ; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

MATTHEW v. 17.

THUS sublimely did Jesus proclaim his own Mission. “ *I am not come to destroy, but to FULFIL.*” I do not pretend that in interpreting these Words as I do, I present their whole application, but their scope includes the special point upon which I propose to dwell, and it is this. Christ came to raise men above the necessity of outward Laws and arbitrary institutions, and make them a Law to themselves, living from a spiritual perception and a Divine Life in their own souls, and so in accordance with the Law of God, which Law is, in other words, the only mode of the soul’s perfection—its Holiness and welfare. This is not proclaiming that all outward Laws are wrong, that all arbitrary institutions are falsehoods. They have had a good

mission to perform. They have been restrictive and suggestive. The law that tells me I shall not steal, and if I do steal my right hand shall be cut off, may be a good law, in its season. There is a time when man's intellect is limited, when his moral sentiments are undeveloped, and in order to prevent him from doing wrong, the first lesson that he can learn is, that he will receive injury, if he does steal. Now to pause with this, and to look upon it from the Christian point of view, makes the Law often very meagre and very ignoble. All that it has done thus far is to excite a selfish fear. The man will not steal, because, if he does steal, he will receive hurt. Why it is wrong to steal, he does not know, and the *disposition* to steal is in his heart. But there stands the Law and the penalty. "Thou shalt not steal"—"if thou dost steal thou losest thy right hand." And he pauses and desists from his purpose. But now he may be led to take another step, and ask—"Why should I not steal? Why do this law and this penalty exist? I know they do exist, but the mere fact of their existence is not satisfactory. I see things existing in the material world, but there is a *reason* for their existence." This will naturally lead him to inquire into the nature and the reason of right and wrong, and then he may

desist from stealing, from other motives than the mere fear of losing his right hand. So you see this law, and laws of a like character, may be good in their places—they restrain men from doing wrong—they are suggestive of moral distinctions. So with many institutions. Take, for instance, the Mosaic Ritual. Its ceremonies were suggestive, were premonitory. They led the dark idolator, and the passion-blinded Jew, up to a Perception of the Oneness of the Deity, and by material Symbols prepared them for spiritual realities. To have introduced them, at once, into the broad Dispensation of Christianity, would have been a violent transition, unlike any other Process of the Creator, who in His universe brings forth first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. Shall we say, then, that the *connecting links*, the preparatory steps, were unnecessary and false? Every Law that restrains men from wrong, or suggests the right; every institution that opens up a clearer perception of the reality of things, is good in its place. Christ's Dispensation does not contradict them, does not repudiate them, but it *supersedes* them—rather it absorbs them—as the ocean absorbs the countless water-drops, the rivulets and streams that have flowed through many sections—absorbs them all in its boundless bosom, and,

accomplishing what these lesser streams in their several localities could not do, rocks navies, transports rich merchandise, and heaves its blessings upon a thousand shores. These Laws and these institutions are false, and false only, when men undertake to *perpetuate* them—to bind them around the soul when it has out-grown them—to invest them with an abiding sanctity when the occasion for them has passed away. Each atom of good in them shall live for ever, but it has passed into a higher organization. Seek not now the Law of the acorn, it has become absorbed in the Law of the oak—anon, the law of the oak has become the law of wind and vapor, of soil and sunshine, and these are embraced in some more comprehensive principle. So goes on the process in the natural world. We progress from lesser laws that are good in their departments, up to some greater Law that *comprehends* these. Light is one law and heat is another. The Philosopher looks to see if both are not effects of a single cause—Electricity, perhaps, and electricity may be the effect of Magnetism, or *vice-versâ*; and, by and by, men may come to see that all the multiform changes of nature hang upon one single cause—which cause is itself, what? The first manifestation of that Intelligence who speaks and it is

done, who commands and it stands fast. But if men ever arrive at such an elevation as to discover the great agent that is the controlling law of the material universe, shall they say that it *destroys* these lesser laws of Magnetism, electricity, light, heat? Will it make them false? No—it will *confirm* them—it will show their highest relations—it will not destroy, it will *fulfil* them. Do you not now understand how it was, that although Christ came to break Symbols and to abolish Rites, and to introduce a new Dispensation, he came not to destroy but to fulfil?

And do you not now see also the point upon which I am laboring—the Work of Christianity in the human soul?—That it aims to raise man above his dependence upon human laws and outward institutions, to intimate relationship with God, and to direct action from His own Spirit, if I may say so, indwelling in the soul? Human Laws and outward Institutions, I have said, are *restrictive* and *suggestive*—but they are not *creative*. They may prevent from doing wrong, they may suggest the right—but they cannot create the *good disposition* from which all consistent virtue emanates, and without which we shall ever be inclined to do wrong, and have but fitful glimpses of the right. The existence of

laws is an evidence of human imperfection. If every man was "a law to himself," after the fashion of Christianity, there would be no need for legislators and enactments. If men had no disposition to murder, there would be no need for a law concerning murder. Laws are made as crimes and wrongs appear. The promulgation of a new edict is the token of a new manifestation of evil. The nation that has occasion for the least laws is the most advanced in true civilization. A land that should require no prisons and no magistrates, would be the happiest land on the face of the earth, because we should find there a community whose members do right for righteousness' sake—whose *acts* not alone, but whose *disposition* is to do good. The reason why we should tremble at the removal of all penalties, and the abolition of all laws, would be because we know men have wrong dispositions, and these would change the license to anarchy instead of freedom. Human laws, then, plainly mark the existence of evil inclinations on the part of men, and the danger that is apprehended from these. These laws, at least directly, make no man any better. They are the rocky headlands, and the careful breastworks, that shield from the fury of the impetuous waves—not the eternal lights that stream long and far over the troubled waters,

to guide the wanderer and confirm the doubting. They appeal almost wholly to *selfish* principles. The good citizen is anxious for the preservation of the laws, because without them his life and his property are insecure—many a bad man may keep the laws, but it is because if he break them he will suffer. So, I say, these laws are good in their season. For one I am far from recommending their abolition. However highly I may estimate human nature I am not romantic, and whatever schemes I may indulge for human improvement I would not be Utopian. There must be a great work accomplished in the souls of men before we abolish all laws, but that is a work that the laws can never perform. Until the flame of evil desire is quenched in the human heart ; until the taint of sin, ages old, running deep and vital through the springs of action is removed, like the leper-spot, by the power of Christ, there will be crimes to punish, and wrongs to legislate for, the wide world over—in every stage of civilization, and under every form of government. The attempt to do away with bloody penalties and harsh laws is only made by a community in which is the consciousness that men have outgrown them—that they do more evil than good, by encouraging the very spirit that they should repress, and that laws which

maintain more intimate relations to the springs of crime and afford more pungent motives, are to be preferred to those the only characteristics of which is their *severity*. One of the ideas of our age is that of moral suasion, and in its place it is a noble idea. But it may also be erroneously estimated. It would not do to strip away all penalties, without any regard to the dispositions of men. There must be an appeal made to man's intellect and his heart, and when these can be influenced, then a reform will be accomplished and a check will be given to sin, better than all enactments or rigors can secure. This I understand to be the true aim of Moral Suasion—to influence the intellect and the heart—to appeal to *motives*; which it is deemed is a far more efficient preventive of crime than the mere blow which is returned for a blow. But with what agencies shall moral suasion work upon the heart? I answer, with the precepts and influences of Christianity.

Thus, then, we are brought to this fundamental truth, that in order to prevent crime and evil action, we must alter the dispositions of men; that human laws and penalties cannot reach these; that the best efforts for Reform aim at these, and that moral suasion is efficacious only as it controls the *intellect* and the *heart*.

Everywhere we turn for a higher Principle than we find in human institutions—we seek an Element that shall penetrate the *heart*, that shall control and guide the *disposition*. This is the great want of society in its aspects of crime and shame and wrong. You may utter your penalties from the Tribunals of the Magistrate in tones of thunder, you may soak scaffolds with human blood, you may rear walls of impregnable granite that shall frown in the very midst of busy life, you may plead for Peace, and Temperance, and Chastity—but until man's *affections* are altered, until his soul yields to that gushing influence that is the spirit of the Precept “Love God and man,” War will stalk abroad with its havoc, red-handed Murder will seek its victims at noon-day, Inebriety will stagger through the crowded streets, and impudent Sin will open its doors in the very face of virtue.

You boast of your *Reforms*—but sound not your trumpet of victory too soon. There is a mightier work to be accomplished than that which binds men together in associations, or makes them enthusiastic in great causes and pledges them to its support. Associations perform a good office. They awaken men from *selfishness*, draw them together by revealing the

common bond of humanity, and in their great agitation of sympathies reveal the practical phases of the doctrine of human brotherhood. But they do not occupy the highest point in true civilization. They are but the medium ground that leads to better things. They aim—every association that has a true idea aims—to produce a free and a safe *individualism*; to make each member of the human family feel that he is a *man*, and to know what depends upon that fact, the responsibility that hangs upon it, the dignity that belongs to it, the Great Law above all laws, the law of our spiritual being, that is to be obeyed. You should wish to make the drunkard a sober man, not because his neighbor is sober, not because it is popular to be sober, but because it is *right*—because that law of right is binding upon *him*, individually—because he is bound to be sober, if all men beside were reeling with their wine-cups to destruction. So with all Reforms. Their true end is accomplished only when they make each man feel his individual responsibility—feel that for and from himself alone he is to stand or fall—feel that there is a Great Law which he, *he* is always and everywhere bound to obey, let the world move as it will, because he is a *man*. This, I say, is the true end of Reforms; and it is to be feared that in the pro-

minence which we give to the principle of *Association*, we lose sight of it, or under-estimate it. I say, then, we must not rest upon our armor, furl our standards, and sound our clarion of triumph, until men are not only reformed *outwardly* but *inwardly*—not as *masses* but as *individuals*. And, therefore, there is yet a great work to do. Oh! strip off the veil that the sunny light of day and the decencies of society cast upon human life. Look in upon its million beating hearts. Read the corrupt desire that lurks below the smooth address. See the smouldering flame of passion whose outward manifestation is covered by a smile. Go behind the masked faces that crowd the public streets, and see the hideous thoughts that creep and nestle there all unchecked. See the ferocious hate, the salacious wish, the selfish narrowness, the unyielding pride, that flit like dark spectres across, or fan with untiring wings their embers in the soul. Here, oh! Legislator, are the *sources* of crime—can thy nicely-adjusted Law that decrees so much penalty for so much overt action, reach these, the main-springs of it all? Here, oh! Reformer, is the life of the evils at which thou art aiming. This painted mask of Folly, this ancient custom of Sin, this shameless harlotry of Vice, thou mayest repress to-day; but to-morrow they will be all

abroad again, in some new shape, under some trickery of human wit, some garment of moral sanctity perhaps—but they will be all abroad, because the heart will throw out its tenants. Could you drain the sea? From its thousand brine-springs, from its arteries that reach to the heart of great mountains, from its gurgling caves that pierce to the centre of the earth, *a new ocean* would ever rush unconquered and inexhaustible.

But if sin thus lurks everywhere around us, what shall we say of that dark mass, that in dens and cellars, in peopled cities, lies matted together, steeped in vice and loathsome with crime? They were cradled in sin. They have always breathed tainted air. What light has reached them, has come dim and straggling through the murky atmosphere of their being, and this has been almost wholly quenched by the necessities of poverty, the hardening influences of association and example, and the excesses of gross and bestial sensuality. Thousands, millions are there in this condition, seething together in sin, brooding over dark and fearful thoughts, feeding on the very offal of wickedness, clothed in the very rags of moral destitution. And what a vast work is to be accomplished in them! When you have made your rules concerning pauperism, and decreed your laws against

crime, and organized your societies for the suppression of vice, your power to affect this mass has not reached skin-deep, unless you have introduced elements that shall penetrate to the *Will*, and that shall elevate and guide the *Affections*. Ere the true work is accomplished, *each one* of that enormous multitude is to be raised to a consciousness of his *responsibility*, to a sense of his *dignity*. In that furnace of all vile passions that burns with a roaring flame in his heart, is to be kindled the fire of love and of devotion. His whole moral atmosphere is to be renovated. He who in his pursuit of evil hardly pauses for the barred dungeon, or the fearful gallows, is to be raised to such a height that if there were not a prison, or a gibbet, or a law in the land, he would not commit a wrong any more than he would cut off his right hand, pluck out his right eye, or take for his drink a draught of burning coals.

Here then, in this mysterious nature within us, upon the throne of this *Will*, in the home of these *Affections*, is to be the great reformation. Without that, all laws, all associations, are futile and shallow. When we look thus deeply into the human heart, into this tossing sea of passions, these clamorous interests, these stormy, unbridled lusts—how insignificant do our prison-walls seem,

how impotent our “act to amend an act entitled an act!” As though by cunning shifting, and adjustment to every new sin, we thereby prevented sin! Why our very laws themselves, how are they abused!—made a cloak for the very iniquity they were meant to crush—made a dagger for the very innocence they were ordained to shield. Under the sanction of the law, Fraud plays its juggling tricks—under the sanction of the law, wealth tramples upon honest poverty—under the sanction of the law impudent libertinism ruins unprotected virtue, and crime goes unpunished, and innocence suffers. And until we rise to that Law that is above all laws, when men shall do right for righteousness’ sake, and love the Good for itself alone—when at midnight, or in the desert, or on the lonely sea, he will deal fairly with his brother from pure motives, and live a virtuous life from the dictates of a virtuous heart; until a revolution like this takes place, I say, we must expect to find transgression and evil in the world. The *Will* and the *Affections*, what shall control these? The human *WILL*, headlong and irresistible—it has broken down barriers of eternal rock, and swept over deserts of frozen ice, and bridged torrents, and felled forests; and what it is in the *material* world, it is in the *moral*, a principle

that halts at no obstacle and that moves in all things as the inner impulse dictates. The human AFFECTIONS, strong and unquenchable, how will they cling to whatever they cherish! If they worship *Mammon*, what danger shall deter them—what wide sea or dreary waste shall prevent—nay, at what crime will they revolt? If they seek for *Fame*, who shall stand between them and it? What height so dizzy that they will turn back—what gulf so deep that they will shrink? If their hunt is for *Pleasure*, they care not for all its stings. They will drain the wine-cup though its drops are molten fire; and even when they see the ruin approaching and hear the hoarse murmurs of the storm, they will sacrifice all to the bliss of the moment and recklessly melt into the charmed delusion.

I have thus endeavored to unfold to you the Great Work that is to be performed, ere that at which the laws aim, and which Reformers seek for is accomplished—the abolition of wrong and sin from human society. I have endeavored to unveil, to some extent, the human soul as its circumstances actually are at this moment, all around and within us, among high and low, rich and poor; and have shown you the fearful *sources* of iniquity lying in the main-springs of all action—the Affections and the Will.

And now, I ask, if that System which should come into the world, having for one of its objects the elevation of the soul to such a degree of goodness and moral strength, as to destroy the will and the disposition to sin, I ask if that System is not worthy of being heralded by Angels—of being announced in a Chorus of Glory to God in the Highest, of Peace and Good-Will to men? Yes, Glory to God in the Highest! Glory to Him in the Great Design, and the Triumphant Means of accomplishing such a work! Glory to Him that must result from the consummation of manhood purified from its sins, elevated above its sensuality, living the true and Divine life! And on earth, Peace to men! Peace after the stormy warfare of passion and guilt. Peace by the old shrines of martyrdom and on the fields of ancient battle. Peace in the haunts of secret crime, and the homes of shameless transgression. Peace where clanked the prisoner's chain, and where groaned the doomsman's axe. Peace where rose the sobs of injured innocence and the pleadings of trampled, bleeding humanity. Peace in the individual soul, where all is in harmony with God, and where the end of human laws and outward institutions is not destroyed but *fulfilled*—fulfilled in the highest and the deepest sense.

And such a work, I say, Christianity came to accomplish. Here lies an explanation of its glorious Prophecies and its blessed anticipations. In this consummation shall the valley be exalted and the mountain be brought low. In this shall the lamb lie down with the lion, and the leopard with the kid. In this shall the wilderness and the solitary place be glad, and the desert bud and blossom as the rose.

Christianity is not anarchy—is not opposed to human institutions; it is above them, the great Fountain from which they derive their sanctity and their vigor. It does not aim, with rash hand, to abolish all human laws at once. To do this would be commencing with the *outward* and proceeding to the *inward*. But as long as the inward is wrong, the outward will be needed as a support and a protection. To strip away the outward first, then, would be to leave society and man exposed to all the violence of unbridled passion and fearless sin. But Christianity commences with the *inward*. It lays the deepest stress upon the regulation of every *motive*. It says a man that hates his brother is tainted with murder; and he who offends in one point of law is guilty of all. And when it has moulded the disposition, and renovated the heart and infused into it its spirit, then the outward law will not

be destroyed, but it will melt away of itself—the necessity for it will be gone, its end will be reached, it will not be destroyed, it will be fulfilled. So long as there is need for the law, then, maintain the law; but remember this—whenever there is such need, there is also needed something else. Christianity is needed—the right affections, the good Will are needed. He is needed, who when he comes, comes to elevate man above the necessity for outward laws—comes not to bring anarchy but freedom, not violence but love—comes not to destroy but to fulfil.

My friends, it is but lately that we celebrated the anniversary of the Advent of Christ and Christianity. And it seemed peculiarly appropriate that the commemoration of that Event should fall, as it did, upon the Sabbath! Christmas upon the Sabbath! Thus the memorial of Christ's Birth was blended with the Associations of his Death. On that day, the Angels who sat by his Tomb, were in the company of those who proclaimed his Advent. Through the flash of his Resurrection morning shone the star that hung over his Manger. The Annunciation "Unto us is born a Prince and a Savior," mingled with the triumphant Anthem, "He is risen."

But now what is this Christmas that we celebrate? Is it an *historical* Advent merely that it

proclaims, or is it an *experimental* Advent also? Is it confined to a peculiar day and season of the year, or is it for all souls, at all seasons? "I travail in birth again," said the Apostle Paul, "Until Christ be formed in you." What a depth of meaning is here! This is the true Advent of Christ. Oh! to every soul is it Christmas morning when Christ is thus formed within it—when his spirit enters as its Teacher and Guide. Then a chorus of Angels is heard. Then light breaks in like that which hung over Euphrata. Then all that is good in human laws and outward institutions is fulfilled, for we become a law unto ourselves.

Hearer, this is an individual work—back of the renovation of society lies the renovation of individuals. It is a work of high and solemn, the *highest*, the most solemn responsibility. Let each one give heed to it!

DISCOURSE IV.

THE MISSION OF CHRISTIANITY.

Preached in Brooklyn, L. I., January 17th, 1843.

—— Speaking the truth in love ——

EPHESIANS iv. 15.

HERE we have the *matter* and the *manner* of the Gospel, the *letter* and the *spirit*. This is the great element of hope for man; upon this Principle—"The Truth spoken in Love," depend the progress and the regeneration of the race. What a sublime and beautiful apposition! TRUTH and LOVE. Shrouded in murky shadows, or resting beneath the uncertain and tremulous midnight, or waking from its fitful slumbers to catch the gray glimpses of the morning, the world has long waited for these two orbs of light and power. Lo! yonder they rise together in the Constellation of the Cross.

The world, my friends, is full of *falsehoods*. You will understand—not merely deceits of the tongue, not only acts of purposed and barefaced deception, but frauds that lie deeper than these,

and appear in more varied manifestations. In the customs, the laws, the polity, the religion of the world, in social and individual elements, in doctrines and practices, in hopes and pleasures, in a thousand familiar and novel things, there lurk falsehoods. Whatever deludes and cheats men, whatever human error, or passion, or sin has built up and established in the place of truth, is a falsehood. The desire that you will often see a man hugging to his bosom, cherishing through sunshine and storm, sacrificing honor and health and virtue for it, that desire, I say, although he may not think so, is a falsehood—it would be better for him that he were halt and maimed without it, for only without it can he enter into life—it would be better for him if it were plucked up by the roots, although his very heart-strings have grown around it. The white-faced sanctimoniousness that often passes you in the streets, that has so many Religious *words* and so few Religious *deeds*, that “with one hand puts a penny in the purse of charity, and with the other takes a shilling out,” that smooth and decent thing is a living lie, and, if it were a day of revelation, would have “falsehood” written on its frontlet, and on the borders of its garments, and on its broad phylacteries. The fashionable round of life—the gilding of society—with its

polished and adamantine etiquette, its gauzy virtue, its respectable moralities, its hollow professions of friendship, its ghastly smiles of welcome, what is it when you strip off its rind—when you lay bare its reality? Deep in the dust and ashes of its hollow heart lies the black core of falsehood. The Charity of men of the world, your donors whose names are printed in newspaper lists, whose gifts shine and sparkle to the world that the left hand may know what the right hand doeth—what is this? In that wan face which pleads in vain beneath the pelting storm for a miserable pittance—in that neglected benefactor of other days, who sits amid the desolate memories of ingratitude, sick and poor—in that pleading debtor who looks in vain to that inexorable brow—in the hire of the laborers who have reaped down his fields, and whose wages are of him kept back by fraud; in all these aspects I read the utter baseness of his *Charity*, and know that his assumed benevolence is falsehood.

But these may seem matters of secondary importance. I mention them, however, in order that you may see with what a complexity of deception your ordinary life, your daily walks, are surrounded. Strike what to your eyes may seem most fair out in this busy mart of humanity, it

is quite likely that it will ring hollow to the blow—press it somewhat hard, and it may crumble to ashes. “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together until now.” Why is it so? It is a fair, nay, it is a most beautiful world. There is no nook so covered with Lapland ice, there is no waste so desolate with drifting sand, that it will not reveal to the curious eye some trait of Beneficence, some delightful arrangement of Wisdom. From the sheeted cataract to the drop of dew, from the cloud that melts in a breath of air to the mountain that is wet with the baptism of a million rains, through every order and every part, we are constrained to say—“it is indeed a beautiful world.” And who seems more fitted to enjoy all this than man—this creature of godlike mould and cunning workmanship, this being of mighty thoughts and all-embracing sympathies, this living soul of exhaustless powers and infinite aspirations? And yet of all beings, who so unhappy, who so short as he? It is not the rock that really travails, it is not the river that groans, it is not the beast of the field that sighs under this bondage of corruption. That cry of woe comes from man—it bursts from his troubled, laboring heart—and if to him the outer world moans and struggles it only does so in *seeming*; he interprets its dumb and me-

chanical agencies by his own intense sufferings. But now what is the cause of this awful and sometimes almost doubtful conflict? I answer, man is bowed down and crushed and penetrated by *falsehoods*! These have left their scars wherever he has trodden—they rise up in mountain-masses between him and the sun.

Yes, my friends, these wars, these tyrannies, these superstitions, these frauds and murders, this abuse of the image of God by man, these hatreds and strivings and deeds of silence are all falsehoods; and men are deluded, crushed, bowed down with links of iron by crimes and sins that are ages old, hoary, yet strong and cruel. Thus is it with the *individual*, thus is it with the *race*—thus does it appear to him who looks around him with a scrutinizing eye, or abroad upon the wide world of humanity.

But must this always be so? Something is needed to make man happy—something to give him deliverance, and perfection, and life. If we have a Father, if He cares for us, we may be sure that He has given or that He will give the means for this deliverance and perfection and life. Hearer, He has given it—He has given the Truth. Man is surrounded with *falsehoods*—this is one view of things, it is the view which we have been taking. But it is, so far, only a

partial view. We must look upon the economy of things in another and a more cheering aspect. It has been said, that near the spot where the deadly serpent lurks is found the herb that cures his bite. Is it not so in every scale of events? Is there not an antidote for the bane—does not light lie around the darkness—where sin abounded does not Grace superabound? The world is full of falsehood, is it not also full of *Truth*? If man is weak enough to be entangled by the one, is he not strong enough to lay hold of and to wield the other? Yes, it is even so. Nothing is hopelessly lost. Through various phases, as the race needs, appears the Truth; it is mightier than the falsehood, it shall prevail. Upon the degraded brow of ignorance falls the light of knowledge, through the ranks of enslaved nations and over their thrones of despotism, strides young and victorious liberty, and far above this error-bound and sinful world, far above its scepticism, and its tears, rise Calvary and the Cross, and hard by it is the Tomb in the rock—the gateway of the future and the immortal.

The Principle, then, which shall deliver us is Truth, and it has been given us. It is revealed in *nature*. Whatever is wrong in society or in individual action is *artificial*—is produced by man—is not established in the natural economy

of things. The laws of nature can not be abolished. If there were a wrong, then, incorporated into these laws—if there were a falsehood woven into this unceasing mechanism, how sad would it be for us! But, as we penetrate to these laws—as we strip off the veils that have hidden its rare secrets from our ignorance and our error, as we come into communion with its intimate life, we find nothing that is wrong, nothing that is hurtful in nature, nothing but evinces the operation of a Power working with tissues of light and darkness, in the womb of the earth and abroad through the everlasting heavens, for the best ends. And when man does wrong, when he sins against his capacity, when he falsifies his destiny, nature rebukes him—and beautiful lessons she reads to him from the waters, the earth and the stars. Yes the truth is revealed in nature. But the difficulty is that we are too dim-eyed to read all its Scripture—we are a progressive race and can know but part at a time, and we need some higher Revelation.

But we are not left to nature. The truth is revealed in reason and in conscience. There is in man an intuitive power. Nature is not to him what it is to the beast. It is not a broad meadow to graze in, a collection of hills and valleys to skip upon; indeed over its elements he

has not so much dominion as the mere animal. He can not cleave its air like the soaring bird or breast its waters like the fish. And yet, to him, nature has a use that it has not to the eagle and the lion. It speaks to something in *him* of something beyond *it*. He recognizes in himself a sympathy with that which produced the order, and beauty, and power of nature—with that of which these are only the *manifestations*. He acknowledges intuitively, I say, a Power above nature, from which all right and good and true creations emanate—a Power that is Goodness and Righteousness and Truth. And the same intuitive faculty discerns the Right, the Good and the True when they are presented to it, amid all the falsehoods with which we are engirdled. And man has in him, moreover, a power which speaks out for right and against wrong. When he has violated an obligation, when he has sinned against a lawful requirement, when he has turned his back upon the light that he might do a deed of darkness, there has spoken “a still, small voice” in the depth of his soul with a power more awful than thunder. It is so the wide world over. It is woven into man’s spiritual constitution. Without it he would cease to be *man*—more than if he was deprived of his upright position, or his eyes, or his hands. And

in these two elements of Reason and Conscience, I say, the Truth is revealed.

But Reason and Conscience have not been found sufficient teachers of the Truth. They have either not taught all the Truth that man needs, or else have not had power to impress him with all they taught. A higher Revelation has been given. It came with the direct Sanction of Heaven, to the world-wide humanity. It came from a region beyond this rigid materiality—it came from beyond earth and the tomb. It came not in thunder, nor in waves of red lightning from the mountain-cloud. The earthquake did not cradle it—it was not born in the whirlwind. It came not in parchment laws, nor in an ordered priesthood. It is true, Angels heralded its birth—but their song was sweet and kind, such as the desolate rejoice to hear, such as the mourner listens to with gladness. Angels heralded its Birth—but its Birth itself was no gorgeous event. That Truth came not in a Voice, not in an Institution, but in a LIFE—a meek and lowly LIFE. The World hardly looked for this, the old, falsehood-bound World, swathed around with superstition, leaning upon its sword, scarred by its vengeful conflicts, giving ever and anon a hollow laugh of scepticism as to all faith and all virtue, and then moaning

like a very woman over the mystery of the dead—the World, under whose power men were bound, hardly expected to find the Truth in this shape, in the Life of an humble, coarse-clad Man, proclaiming doctrines that rebuked alike the oppressions of the tyrant and the superstition of the Slave—that below the purple robe of the Monarch and the ragged tunic of the beggar, laid bare the same precious soul, that amid the clangor of revenge and hate breathed his Precepts of Mercy and Peace, and called upon all men as wanderers, as prodigals, as seekers of the vile and the transitory, to return home to their Father's house. Yes, my friends, the Truth that we need to deliver us from the thralldom of so many falsehoods, has been revealed in a single Life. It came to the world and the world knew it not. When men were looking for a Deliverer, it came to deliver, but not with sword and banner. It robed itself with no purple majesty, it took no high seat in the synagogue. But it went out among the lowly and the poor, it mingled with fishermen and publicans. It brought no forms, it set up no complicated ordinances. It made the green heath a shrine as holy as the decorated temple, and the broken prayer of the penitent heart a richer offering than gold or spices. It made no distinction be-

tween men save that of goodness, it set no value on any thing that man possessed except his soul. In place of earthly riches, it opened to the race a treasure beyond the skies—in place of earthly triumphs, it led the way to a heavenly victory. It wrote no huge volumes, it framed no specific laws. Justice, Humility, Mercy, Truth, Love, Meekness, and kindred virtues, it patiently taught these to the world—sowed them, precious seed, in the few hearts that would receive, and calmly went its way, its way of toil and suffering and death. Few and faint were the gleams of light that broke upon that LIFE—full of sorrows was it, smitten and afflicted. The poor gathered around it and blessed it—the suffering uttered broken hosannas in its path. But few plaudits went after it, no trains of splendid triumph followed it. Darkness closed around its latter days. In rapid succession came trials upon it. Friendless was the man who was the friend of all men. Thorned was the brow that was ever lighted with benignity and love. The hands that were always open for the doing of good were pierced with cruel torture; and the lips that could quiver in their last agony with Forgiveness, quivered with the death of the Cross. And so he lived, and so he died. True, a sublime triumph followed—but few saw it.

It was made no occasion of display, no source of sudden wonder that should convert the world with a stroke. The rock-bound Tomb burst open, and he arose with Death's pale garland in his triumphant hand. But it was only revealed to a few. As he had lived above the time, calmly trusting not to terror, not to force, not to excitement—but to simple Truth, to do the work he wished, so he rose. He left it for ignorant fishermen and rude peasants to proclaim it to the world, and went to the home from whence that Truth came.

So, my friends, that Life was not like that which so many have honored. It was not the life of a Warrior, quivering through blood and flame. It was not the life of a Philosopher, starry with intellect. It was not the Life of a Law-Giver, enrolled in the polity of nations. And yet, no Life has had such an influence upon the world as that Life—no Life ever shall. It has been the source of life to others. It has gone through dark ages of the world's history, tempering the passions of men with its spirit of meekness, and guiding the erring with its hand of pity. And in the darkest hour, when its very name has been used to cover monstrous perversion and abominable sin, it has shone, the only light the world had. In the bosom of a perse-

cuting Church, it has still asserted its great Doctrine of human Brotherhood. In the midst of licentiousness and sensuality, it has made its themes the highest ideals of the artist. And when all around seemed hemmed in with impassable barriers and gloomy shadows, one bright spot has opened like an avenue to fairer hopes—an avenue through the Tomb whence he ascended. That Life, that Life of Christ! It has achieved unspeakable victories—victories which mailed hand and armed host never could have accomplished. It overturned the marble gods of Greece. It plucked dominion from the throne of the Cæsars. It tamed the rude barbarian, as he stood exulting amid the ruins of ancient civilization—it carried its meliorating power into the very heart of the Middle-Ages—it spoke in the grand Doctrines of the Reformation—it came with the Pilgrims through the stormy ocean of December—it is in the van, far in the van of the noblest efforts and the best hopes of the present age. That Life of Christ! Not alone has it been the guiding Light of nations. Not alone has it wrought in Grand Reforms. It has risen like a star on the night of individual sin and sorrow. It has spoken in tenderness to the broken heart. It has guided the straying to the Fold of Peace. It has been the Stay

of the Poor when all else hath broken, and it hath been remembered when all other memories have failed.

And now my friends, what was that Life that it should thus be above all other lives?—that it should thus enlighten and Bless the world? It was a Revelation of the *Truth*—of the *Truth* in *Love*. Yet, it was not merely—may I not say, chiefly the Doctrine Jesus Taught?—it was the *Life* he lived, that marks the peculiarity of the Founder of Christianity, that makes him indeed the Great Teacher. That Life was a Life of Truth. Is *Benevolence* a Truth? Is it opposed to the falsehood of uncharitableness and selfishness? Behold there *living* Benevolence, see it manifested in the healing of the withered limb, the opening of the blinded eye. Is *Meekness* a Truth? Is it opposed to the arrogance and pride that lift up the head and swell the heart? See there *living* Meekness, in him who refused even to be called Good, who, though pronounced excellent from the heaven of heavens, bore the same humility alike when he rode upon outspread palms, or stood amid the insults of Roman soldiery. Is *Forgiveness* a Truth? Is it opposed to the Revenge that burns to the marrow of the bones, and the unrelenting vindictiveness that taunts its victim in the very agonies of dying

torture? Behold there such Forgiveness as the world has never seen, bursting from him who is streaming with blood for those who had pierced him.

My friends, do you not see that Christianity is a Life, that the Life of Christ is Christianity? There, embodied in one individual is the Truth that the world needs—the world, so bound and penetrated with falsehoods. But that Life was not the Truth alone. The Truth!—it might have broken upon the ears of a guilty world, in tones of thunder—it might have been revealed in a stern messenger, who come only to rebuke and to compel. But it did not so come. Oh! no. It came in LOVE. It came with a Father's Voice to wandering, erring children. All that had power to *convince*, was united with all that had power to *win*. The human heart has been so constituted, that in order to a cheerful obedience to duty it must *love* that duty. You may speak the truth to yon wretched outcast. But you speak it, perhaps, in a harsh tone—you speak it with a virtue awfully severe. But he is steeled against *that*. He has learned no other doctrine. He has experienced from the world harsh treatment, and he has lived a harsh life in return. He has so often bared his bosom to the storm that it has become callous. But now, if you spoke

that same truth in *love*—if you speak it with a manner that shows that you sincerely feel for him, that you still sympathize with him beneath all his wretchedness and all his scars, he is not ready for *that*—the voice is new and delightful, it sounds to him like his mother's voice heard in days of childhood; he has met no one since in the hard and selfish world, that has cared for him, until now. And he opens his heart to the truth because it comes in *love*—it comes to him not merely as a *subject*, but as a *child*.

Now such we deem to be the characteristic of Christianity. It speaks the *Truth*, but it also speaks it in *Love*. It cares for men. It seeks not only their obedience, but their affections. Other religions have not done so. They have sought to appal and to bind. To *make* men good, not to *make good men*. As though goodness were something extraneous, that can be forced upon the heart, instead of a genial power that of itself opens and enters the heart. Men have made virtue severe and Religion awful. And from the same, or from similar principles, have proceeded the wrongs of government, of laws, of institutions—the wrongs between man and man—the falsehoods of society, of individual life. Religion having been exhibited as not desirable in itself, men have been pronounced by nature

alien from Religion—as creatures that must be driven into obedience—as selfish beings ready to break from virtue at the least opportunity. So Despotism has set up its plea to rule men with a rod of iron. So rigid laws and awful penalties have been instituted. So man has grown distrustful of man, has held communion with hate and fear rather than love. So men have placed Religion on the outside and kept a rotten observance. So man has been brought to think of a verity that there is some good in sin, and thus to hug to his bosom a deceitful lie.

I have not time to enter into an analysis to show the very legitimate evolution of all these evils from the lack of confidence in, or from the the ignorance of Love—from the lack of identifying Religion and virtue with Goodness. But I am convinced that what the world has needed, and what it still needs, in order to its deliverance from the falsehoods under which it groans, is not only Truth, but Truth uttered in the spirit of Love. And this, I say, it will find in the Life of Christ. There is the Truth spoken—manifested in Love. What was the cause of Christ's coming? We have it plainly declared—"He so Loved the world that He sent His only-begotten Son." In Will, in Purpose, He who sent and he who was Sent were One. So it

was in Love that Christ came. It was Love that moved in all his Actions, that prompted all his Preachings, that breathed in all his Prayers, that carried him through that suffering Life, that bore him through that painful Death. Christ's Life was the Truth manifested in Love. To speak the Truth in Love, is *the mission of Christianity*.

We have, then, arrived at these results. We have seen that the world is filled with falsehoods, for such are the errors and the sins under which it labors both in individual and in social life—immediately around us, and abroad through the nations of the earth. We have seen, again, that the agent of deliverance from those errors and sins has been given—that agent being the Truth, revealed in nature, revealed in reason and conscience, but more perfectly and effectually embodied in the Life of Jesus Christ—its life and its efficiency subsisting not only on account of the *fulnness* but because of the *spirit* of the Revelation, that spirit being Love.

And now, as we look around us at the sins and the errors that prevail in individual action and in society—as we look abroad upon the world, lying under superstitions, tyrannies, and all abominations, are we not constrained to ask, Why is it so? The answer is ready—the Truth has not been spoken in Love to the extent that

is required. The Life of Christ, with its manifestations and its influences, should be brought to bear more upon the hearts of men. That Life has been long in the world, and yet how little of its Mission is accomplished! How have men misinterpreted and neglected it! And has not the neglect often been the result of the misinterpretation? Yes, Christians themselves have not understood as they ought the Life of the Master. Partially, the Truth perhaps, has been spoken. But it has been uttered coldly and abstractly, veiled in dogmas, encumbered with mysteries, linked with errors and abuses, patronized by bigotry, fanaticism, and superstition. Men have not spoken it in its simplicity, in its freedom—above all, they have not let it gush from hearts warm and melting with Love. And here has been a fruitful source of the comparative inefficiency of Christianity—its *comparative* inefficiency, I say—and I mean by this its inefficiency compared with its own capacity, not with the operation of other systems.

But the age looks brighter, as if it had fallen in the small hours that precede the morning. Christianity is beginning to be better understood. Men discover now that it is not a meagre sectarianism. That it is quite probable that John and Peter and Paul were not veritable Baptists,

or Methodists, or Universalists, in the sectarian acceptation of these terms—that we are not to clip their creed to suit the corners of our notions ; but that we are to draw our Faith, and not merely our Faith but our *action*, from the deep, exhaustless fountains of the Truth which they spoke in Love. It is beginning to be seen that Christianity is no *one* thing, one set form—but that it is all *true* things. It is a gift of Charity, it is a Prayer, it is a Temperance Reformation, it is a Common-School Education, it is a martyr's sacrifice for the right, it speaks in the amenities of every-day life, it murmurs with notes of omen under shameful abuses and ancient thrones, it is in the best strains of the poet, the deepest thought of the philosopher, the noblest aspiration of the philanthropist—it is each, it is all of these ; and still it is something more. It is the consummation of human nature linked with the Divine. It is the perfection of the human soul, ripe with all virtues, redeemed from all falsehood, holding the Truth in Love, erect and free yet subject to Christ and to God.

Now there are two parties in our day, as in some sense there always have been. The one is conservative, timid, distrustful. At the first announcement of a novel doctrine, it takes the alarm and vociferates—“ The Faith of our Fa-

thers ! The Faith of our Fathers ! Oh ! for the good old order and habits of the Past." It thus evinces that it has no idea of more Truth—that it has no faith in progress—that it thinks all virtue and all right to consist in what *it* understands to be virtuous and right. Truth breaks in every day from the heavens, gleams from the bowels of the earth, opens to the farthest mind and the keenest eye, emanates ever with a more sublime beauty from the Life of Christ—but still this cry rings out, "Keep the Faith of our Fathers !" Our Fathers ! We can not wear their garments, we can not preserve their features, neither can we think their thoughts, nor prevent the sun that goes over us from shining upon new days. The Faith of our Fathers needs not our propping. If it is all true, it will, it *must* stand. If anything false is in it let us stand clear of the rubbish that will surely be shaken from it in the march of opinion. Not the Faith of the Fathers, but "The TRUTH"—the Truth as it is in nature, the Truth as it is in reason and in conscience, above all and comprehensive of all—the Truth as it is in Christ ; this is the cry of the second party, which is the Progress Party, the advancing Party, the Party that has Faith in the ultimate triumph of Goodness, hope for man, confidence in the power of Love, belief in the developement

and perfection of the race. The first-named Party, the Conservative Party, is very zealous for old institutions, thinks it bad policy to give too much power to the masses, holds on to the old bloody penalties, is suspicious of these new reforms that talk so loudly of Love and Progress. The second Party, the Progress Party, trusts man because God made him, spurns the old dust-worn parchments that men call Law and Right, reads this Law and this Right in the world-embracing Gospel, throws by the chain the rack and the gibbet, and unfurls to the winds of heaven the banner of Truth and Love, confident that the world will one day follow it. The Conservative party, one would think, might at least preserve pity for the degradation that it can not help, and would sorrow when something dashes the hopes that are entertained of man's advancement. But it is not so. It seems to have a selfish interest at stake. It has taken its stand, and it has a pride of discernment that it would maintain. It has pronounced these hopes fallacious, these opinions licentious, these doctrines heretical, and it cares more for *victory* than for *truth*. So, if there is any slip—if here and there love seems to fail, or a man abandons his principles, or falsifies their influence; if here and there a noble effort is unsuccessful, or a fanatic overacts the

truth—then there is such a shout that its old towers rock again, and its grim pictures on the wall and its mouldering parchments, seem to shake with laughter. So far from desponding, this party often has gleams of the most confident hope; and when, for a time, as is now the case in England, there seems a retrograde movement—when some gifted but distrustful minds, disgusted and sick with the ultraisms and fanaticisms that accompany the progressive spirit, swing away back to the old grounds—then, I say, there comes a gleam of confident hope for this Party, and it fancies that “the good, old times are coming back.” But this is a mistake. The light that shines upon its worn altars is indeed a *rising* light, but the Conservative is sitting with his back to the sun expecting it to come from that quarter of the heavens to which he is looking, when it shines from that point from which he has averted his head.

I will not limit either of these parties to the advocates of any one system, or of any sect. In all sects there are men who sympathize with both parties, sometimes unconsciously. But while I do not thus restrict the operation of these two principles, still it seems to me that the latter, the progressive principle, the hopeful principle, the principle that looks with a genial

eye upon the aspects of things, and waits and labors for the triumph of Love, is found chiefly in the ranks of what is termed Liberal Christianity. Yes, this seems peculiarly the Mission of Liberal Christianity—to break from the errors of ages, to be free yet obedient, to be true yet to love. Speaking the Truth in Love, is the Mission of Liberal Christianity. It has, then, a great, a hopeful Mission. It has the Element which the world needs, for which it is waiting. Oh! how long it has waited. By its old and blood-dimmed altars, beneath its galling chains, bound in its fearful wickedness, penetrated to its very core with sin—how does it wait for the Truth to be spoken in Love! Who shall speak thus? Every one who has the Truth—who loves God, and who loves man. In *your* sphere of action hearer, in your opportunities and capacity, *you* are called upon to speak it. Be prepared, by truly loving God and man, to speak it.

DISCOURSE V.

THE LAW OF CHRISTIAINTY IN THE HUMAN SOUL.

— And every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God. I. John iv. 7.

IN one of these discourses I have spoken of the *Work* of Christianity in the human soul, showing that it raises man above the necessity for outward laws and institutions. I would remark now that the great pre-requisite to such a disposition as will insure this state, is, if I may so speak, *the action of man in unison with God*. But, in order to produce this harmony of the human with the Divine Will, it is necessary to know God, and in order to know Him, it is necessary to expand our affections and elevate our aims—in one word, to be born of Him. But there is yet to be considered the great Element that quickens this moral life and vigor in the soul. This is in fact the LAW of Christianity only the *work* of which we have been considering. What, then, is that Element that shall awaken us from selfish and sensual pursuits—from indifference and sin, and excite in us a

high standard of right, a self-sacrificing spirit, broad views and lofty aims?

I answer, that Element is LOVE. The simple alphabet of the whole matter is LOVE. The Text consisting of but a few brief words, is rich with the unction of Religion, and lays open with one stroke, all that is great and real in philosophy. The proud intellect, searching after God, can not find him out. That He *Is*, it may know. *What* He is, it can not discover. Its last analysis stops far short of the great reality, and baffled and perplexed it is forced to acknowledge a mystery that comes in every breath of wind, quivers in every leaf, and sparkles in every star. It is forced to acknowledge its ignorance—and, if it would know God, must bow down like the little child and *love*.

Each man projects his own idea of God. But, it is plain, if that idea is a false one he shuts out the Deity from his view, and worships in error. Nations and individuals have done this. They have deified the worst passions of the human heart. God has been regarded as dark and vengeful, because dark and vengeful sentiments were in their own souls. Until Christianity came, men did not know God. Altars were red with blood, and flamed with sacrifice. Religion was made an instrument of crushing power or of

paralyzing terror. Man felt in his own heart the agitation of strong and cruel passions, and he extended these to *infinity*, and made a God, or gods, before whom he bowed in superstitious terror. I speak more particularly now, of those to whom no Revelation, so far as we know, came. And even with the Jews, the FATHER was not fully revealed. So much for those nations in whom the sentiments were developed rather than the intellect. If we turn to the versatile and intellectual Greek, still we find not the true conception of God. The hand of genius could mould the marble into a beautiful likeness of grace and power and human symmetry—but still the conception was voluptuous or earthly. We had the languishing Venus, or the manly Appolo, or the brawny Hercules. But there was none of that rapt *spirituality* that glows in the face of a Catholic Saint, or that benignant *Love* that has been transmitted to us in pictures of our Savior. As to their philosophic idea of God, some few minds, here and there, may possibly have risen to a true conception; but with more it was a mysterious and intelligent Force, or a Being to whom they could never rise with the sublimity of the ancient Hebrew. *God was not truly known, until Christ came.* It needed an embodied manifestation of the Deity, and we have it in Jesus. Behind the

Intelligent Force of old Philosophers—behind the sublime Omnipotence that the Hebrew acknowledged—Christ points us to a FATHER, and Christianity bases its appeals to our confidence, on the fact that it is a Revelation that satisfies the best affections of the human heart. Thus it is peculiarly—a Religion of the affections; not of the *passions*, but of the benevolent and tender emotions that quiver, at times, in the hardest hearts, and are never utterly quenched in the roughest collisions with the world. I say, these emotions are in the *heart*, though they are not always acted upon, nor carried out in consistent and efficient works. Therefore it is that men, although they have had the Christian Revelation, yet entertain erroneous ideas of God. Still, with many, God is not the *Father* but the *Sovereign*—not the *Merciful* but the *Vengeful*. Is not this owing to the fact that these sentiments are uppermost in their own hearts, and have become sanctified by usage? Why is it that views of God so contrary to the Christian Revelation should prevail? Do we not find the cause in the fact that Christians, as a body, have not and do not *love* as they ought? Take Ecclesiastical history, open it, and read its pages all smeared with blood and cruelty. Read the long conflicts of dispute, the denunciations and the

executions, the doom of heretics and martyrs. See men who have come out from Pagan error, emulating Pagan cruelty. And can you expect a lofty conception of the Deity in such a state of things? Come down to the present day—take the selfishness, the angry, vengeful sentiments, the sensual and narrow ideas that prevail; and tell me if you would not expect that contracted and partial views of God should prevail also? This is the great practical point. In order to know God, men must *Love*—Love as Christ Loved, who was the brightest manifestation of God. They must grow in Love, and they will grow in Knowledge.

To perceive that God is Love, and therefore that the idea of Him that is projected by a Loving soul is the *true* idea, surely requires no demonstration. All around us is that Love—manifested in the garniture of the heavens, speaking in the still, green woods, gushing in streams from the mountain, and breathing in the rejoicing winds. All nature, like one great organ set to melody, utters it with many notes that peal and swell into a sublime anthem, louder than the noise of many waters. But we have seen that it has not been left to *nature* alone to make this manifestation. Christ makes it, and in him God is revealed the clearest to us. It has been beautifully said

that “Nature gives us the *scale*, but Christ the *Spirit* of the Deity.” Nature, with its extent and its grandeur, with its vast and varied works, with its far-reaching compass in which the mind becomes lost and bewildered, with its colossal dimensions, and its irresistible forces; nature helps to form in us some dim notion of the Power and the Infinity of the Being who made it. But Jesus shows us *what* that Being is who made nature—who is its Pervading Soul. Nature displays God’s *Attributes*, Christ reveals His *Essence*. Yes, that Being who rolls the fearful mass of worlds along, and speaks in terrible thunder, and decrees in swift lightning, and exhibits His Power in the up-tossed ocean, and His Greatness in the mountain and the star;—that Being is Kind, like him who healed the sick—Tender, like him who wept for Lazarus—Benevolent, like him who went about doing good—Gentle, like him who laid his hand on the heads of little children—Forgiving, like him who Prayed upon the Cross. “Nature gives us the *scale*, Christ the *Spirit* of the Deity;” and from this do we know that he whose idea of God springs from a loving spirit, knows God in so far as he loves.

We know a great artist by his work—but the more we *sympathize* with him who is seen through

his work, the *better* we shall know him. Through the sculptured marble, breathes the undying spirit of genius. In every lineament it is impressed. But the man without genius looks upon it, and calls it *beautiful*, perhaps—thinks it a nice imitation—dwells upon the naturalness of a finger, or an eye—and passes on. But the man of genius comes there, and makes it a study. He sees in the whole the great spirit of a master. In some unnoticed curve he detects it—he traces long nights of thought, and painful toil, and triumphant success, in some minute member, or in the attitude of some unregarded limb. And as he looks upon it, his own genius catches fire. He communes with that artist—with that artist's spirit—whose body, long ages ago, has mouldered in his grave; and he goes forth himself to throw out some royal creation of the soul. There is something more needed, then, than a mere perception of the work of that artist, to *know* him. There must be *sympathy* with him—a congeniality with the spirit that breathes through that chiselled stone.

So, my friends, using the comparison reverently, we may say that we know the Great Creator as we imbibe His Spirit. The mere philosopher looks only upon the outward work. He notices the wise adjustments, the beautiful order, and is

satisfied that the world had a Maker. But he *knows* not the Maker, because he has none of His Spirit. Nature is not half so full a revelation to him, as to the shepherd, who, in the night-watch, sees a tireless Benignity burning in all the stars, and, as his soul rises in adoration to that Goodness, feels that God is very near to him. The Bigot recognizes in Christ a Manifestation of God. Even *he* must feel that there is something Divine in that unwearied Kindness, and that quenchless Mercy—but he loves not. Dark and bitter feelings are in his heart—therefore, dark and bitter notions rise and cloud his perception, and God is hid behind a veil. But the humble Publican detects in that Forgiving Mercy that has pardoned his sins, something of the Nature of God; and the filial love enkindled in his soul reveals to him the Father.

But, moreover, we may exhaust the genius of the human artist. We may rise to the perception of higher genius than his. But we cannot exhaust our knowledge of God. The finite must ever find something beyond it and above it in the Infinite. The more we *love*, the more we shall *know* of it—but we may increase in love for countless ages, and while the more we shall know, more will lie beyond us to be known. How far are men from exhausting, so to speak,

the mind of Christ ! As we *love* we *know* more of it. We may say that Christ is revealed to the men of this age, with a Beauty and a Power scarcely ever before apprehended. Hence it is, that men now turn so much to the Internal Evidences for Christianity, especially to the Evidence exhibited in Christ himself. Why is this ? Because the spirit of Love is more prevalent than it was, glowing in noble Reforms, and breaking out in schemes of human melioration. As we love we progress in knowledge of Christ, and, through him, in knowledge of God. Christ has always been the same, but he has not always been apprehended in the same degree—hence, the errors and mal-practices of Christians. But the moment men begin to perceive something incumbent upon them as Christians, beside sectarian disputes and war for forms and creeds—the moment men seize the philanthropic spirit of the Gospel, and carry it out—that moment they begin to apprehend Christianity better, and Christ, and God. They rise then, from selfishness to philanthropy, from sensuality to spiritual life, from low motives of expediency to unshaken adherence to the Good, the Right and the True, from worldliness to devotion and faith—and so become Born of God. Then they begin to *Know* Him

—to see, that He is not Power merely, or Intelligence merely, or a Sovereign merely ; but that He is Love. Then they are incited to to act in concert with Him—to love the Good *for its own sake*—to live from the Right and the Holy, as the highest elements and forms of existence ; and *then*, they need not human laws, or outward institutions—they “become laws unto themselves.” “For every one that Loveth, is Born of God, and Knoweth God.”

Thus, my friends, we have traced out this great Law of Christianity in the human soul, and indicated its operation. Does it not, at once, mark Christianity as a peculiar, a Divine Religion ? Thus it came, uttering no forms, entering into no details—but giving to the world a great PRINCIPLE, a Principle that must do for all times and all lands, for all classes and developements of men—a Principle that acted upon and carried out, must banish wrong from the earth, and sin—must raise man to a knowledge of God, to harmony, in all his action, with the Divine Will—the highest point to which he can be raised, yet the point to which he is called by all the dispensations of God that surround him, by the Likeness in which he was formed, by the capacities of his nature, by the Mandate—“Be ye per-

fect, even as your Father who is in heaven is Perfect."

But alas! my friends, we are far back from this consummation. How few are they who even comprehend the ideas of our best Reforms! We wonder that men will resist the appeals that these make. "How can they be deaf to reason and to benevolence," we say. "How can they be blind to palpable facts!" But we do not go far enough in our consideration—we do not look deep enough. Men do not comprehend the spirit of these Reforms, because they do not know God. They do not *Love*, and, therefore, they have wrong conceptions of Him. Here is the point. You may trace back the opposition to these Reforms, to man's Religious notions. If they do not see God aright, they do not see the economy of His Government right, they do not look upon man aright. Hence, these schemes of human melioration, this confidence in the power of love, this appeal to the affections, is to *them* all unintelligible. They have not got on so far. To them retaliatory penalties and severe laws, and arbitrary institutions, seem right, because their ideas, of these spring from their fundamental conceptions of God. A great work is yet to be wrought in them. Their dispositions are to be wholly changed.

They are to be taught to love—then will they be born of God—then will they know Him—then will they act as He Acts, for the good of all, even of the unthankful and the evil—act in Love—act in the spirit of universal benevolence.

Moreover: we must not, in our Reforms, endeavor to forestall the gradual progress of the soul. We must not remove all restraints from the criminally-disposed, nor from the licentious and the passionate—for the very reason that they *are* criminally-disposed, and licentious and passionate. They must first be taught to *Love*—the *desire* to do wrong must be eradicated from their hearts—they must be Born of God and must know God. Then no restraints will be needed. Then human laws will be superfluous.

Look again, at the *Religion* too common, even in Christendom. What a narrow and low principle it is! A system of selfish consideration, in which so much reward is to be rendered, for so much good performed—and so much punishment meted out for so much bad conduct. There is hardly any conception of the fact that Goodness is to be loved *for its own sake*—that the white-robe and the palm-crown intrinsically belong to it, and are not

outward and *material* things. Men do not seem to realize that it is the sinful *desire*—the low, corrupt *ideal*—that is wrong, that brings its own punishment with it; and that the very existence of these material and selfish notions of reward and punishment, marks the indwelling of such a desire, of such an ideal. Hence, we hear men say—“If there was no hell, I would give full licence to sin”—“If this, or that person goes to heaven, it is no heaven for me.” How little do they know of the spirit of true Religion! If there was no hell you would commit sin? Why do you not thrust your hand into the scorching flame? Plainly because in the very act there is torment, and you have no desire to suffer it. So is it with *sin*. *In the very act of sin* you suffer and are degraded. You do not wish to go to heaven, if this or that person is there? Do you not know that it would not be heaven if you were there with such a disposition? Low and narrow, Oh! my friend, are your ideas of Religion, which is the spontaneous offspring of Love—the operation of the Law of Christianity in the human soul. It is living Holy and Good and Pure for the very sake of these things—living a saintly life, or dying a martyr’s death, content to know and be at one

with God—feeling that outward deprivation is not the greatest evil, that *punishment* is a light matter compared with *sin*, that Heaven is where the pure and loving heart is, for then Christ is there, and God.

From these ideas of Religion that issue from a lack of love, we have the formal *hypocrite*. How smooth he lives in the glare of the world—how hideous are the inmates of his heart, could you uncover that heart! He is content with *forms*. No thirst is in him for real good, and therefore he seeks not the Living Spring, but is content to drink from the shallow, muddy pool of outward observance, and to confine the whole of his Religion to ceremony. He does not feel Religion to be a *Life*, to be the *highest Life*, to be a union with God. How should he?—he does not *know* God. How should he know God?—he has never been Born of Him. How should he be Born of Him?—he has never *Loved*.

Hence, too, we have the *Bigot*, the stern-faced, bitter-souled Bigot. He claims to be Religious. Where in him are the tender mercies of Religion? Hear him denounce and doom. Hear him rave and vent his spite. And yet, he claims to be Religious. Religious!—the Religious man should imitate God, as far

as may be. But does that Bigot imitate God? We shudder at the thought! Is he like that Christ—that Meek and Loving Christ? What a comparison! And yet he *must* be like Christ, ere he is *Religious*, truly Religious. Then he must be changed. Yes—*changed* indeed. This bitterness must all be quenched. This vengeful heart must grow soft. A new element, as it were, must be kindled in his nature. He must *Love*. Then he will be Born of God. Then he will know Him. Then he will act in union with Him. And what an altered man he will be then! All kindly now, so lately full of wrath—that once-curling lip now pleading with mercy's words—that once-flashing eye now raining pitying tears! That narrow soul, mad with the love of sect and dooming all beyond its rigid pale, now almost bursting its bounds to clasp all men as brethren, and lead them to their Father and their God.

Once more: Behold the indifference to Religious life, and to spiritual interests that abounds! Here is a great evil. If men do not run wild with fanaticism, or become savage with bigotry, or live in gross and hypocritical formality, or with narrow and sensual notions of religious things, they are prone to be apathetic as to all Religion. To them it is a dull

and gloomy name—an old, trite word—a superstitious whim—an unwelcome and disagreeable thought. How can it be so? Religion!—the communion of the soul with God—its highest life and its greatest consolation—its guide in doubt, its support in sorrow, its hope in death, its “calm sunshine and joy” in all this fluctuating and transitory world—the noblest developement of its being. Why, one would think that men would leap to it, and bind it to their hearts, and love it and guard it, as their richest treasure. Alas! it is not so. Men do not *Love*. Yes, they love—but they love their worldly treasures—love earth and time and sense—love the indulgence of desire, and the excitement of passion—love the body and its gauds—love gain and pleasure and fame;—but feel no throbbing for the soul’s life. To them Heaven is no reality, and God no present Father. They are both far off and unseen; while earth and its joys can be grasped, and these, they virtually deem, are enough. They must learn to Love. Learn to look upon this outer world, and see what is behind all its varied and beautiful creations. A changeless, tireless Love is there—a Goodness that is inexhaustible—a Providence that never sleeps. They must learn to look at Christ and study

his Character, beautiful in its Gentleness, unwearied in its self-sacrifice, sealing its Love for man with Blood—Innocent Blood. They must consider these until *Love* is kindled in their hearts, and then they will be Born of God, and then they will know Him, and then their own souls will throb to His Goodness and move in harmony with His Will. Then this indifference will disappear, this coldness will melt, this sensuality will be shaken off, this sin will die—and men will be indeed, the Children of God.

When shall that time come? Hearer, when shall it come to your soul, and to mine? The work may go on in our souls *to-day*, if we will only *Love*—Love God, love men, love all goodness, earnestly, constantly, sincerely. Is there nothing that calls for this Love? Oh! *every thing* calls for it, if we will only anoint our eyes and see—if we will only unstop our ears and hear. From the Providences of life, our Father calls us—from the agony of the Cross, our Savior urges us. We are called, we are urged to do what? To suffer and sorrow? To part with any thing that is truly precious and good? No: only to *Love*. A child can comply with this requirement—a man can do no more. Only to Love. To Love Him Who

has so long loved us—to Love Him who watches over us when we sleep, Who keeps us while we wake—to Love HIM;—and for what end? For His Good? He needeth not our offerings. We are called and urged to Love Him, for our own good—to Love Him that we may be Born of Him—that we may know Him. Hearer, this is thy great end. Wealth avails thee nothing here, learning is powerless, honors and lustres pale and die. But to rich and poor, to the happy and the desolate, to all men as Children of One great Father, a Blessed Privilege is given—even to be perfect as he is Perfect. Who will not heed this privilege? This is Religion, this is wealth and honor, this is knowledge. Experience teaches it, nature reveals it, Christ proclaims it, Heaven flings back its flashing gates and repeats it—He that Loveth, is Born of God, and knoweth God.

Have we yet material ideas of Heaven—do we dwell chiefly on its crystal splendor, its green palms and its golden streets”? Let us remember that Heaven is purity and spirituality and holiness pervaded by Love.

“Love is the grace that keeps its power
In all the Courts above ;
There *Faith* and *Hope* are known no more,
But saints forever LOVE.

Yes Hope having its best anticipations realized need not pass the radiant gates. Faith that glowed brightest in the hour of desolation, and that soared heavenward from the memorials of death and change, Faith shall be dissolved in vision. But Love can never pass away. It is the element of Eternal Life. Even here we may breathe and commence its immortality. He that Loveth, is Born of God, and knoweth God."









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